


PROVIDENCE
PRAYER AND POWER

WILBUR FISK TILLET



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DIVINE PROVIDENCE, HUMAN PRAYER
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PROVIDENCE PRAYER AND POWER

*Studies in the Philosophy, Psychology and
Dynamics of the Christian Religion*

BY

WILBUR FISK TILLET

DEAN EMERITUS OF THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY AND PROFESSOR
OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE IN VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY



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DEDICATED

TO MY COLLEAGUES AND COWORKERS OF
THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY OF VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY, IN WHOSE FELLOWSHIP AND
FRIENDSHIP A KIND PROVIDENCE HAS PER-
MITTED ME TO WORK FOR THESE MANY YEARS

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." (2 Chron. 16: 9.) "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8: 28.)

Providence is the most comprehensive term in the language of theology. It is the background of all the several departments of religious truth, a background mysterious in its commingled brightness and darkness. It penetrates and fills the whole compass of the relations of man with his Maker. It connects the unseen God with the visible creation, and the visible creation with the work of redemption, and redemption with personal salvation, and personal salvation with the end of all things. It carries our thoughts back to the supreme purpose which was in the beginning with God and forward to the foreseen end and consummation of all things, while it includes between these the whole infinite variety of the dealings of God with man.—*W. B. Pope.*

PREFACE

BOTH as a student and as a teacher of Christian doctrine I have long felt the need of such a book as I have endeavored to provide in this volume. Few if any subjects in the whole realm of religion have been more written about than the Christian doctrine of Prayer. Good and great books on Divine Providence are not wanting; and not a few volumes may be found that treat of Power in a suggestive and illuminating manner. But I am not aware of any book ever having been written which undertakes to relate these great subjects to each other, both in idea and in experience, as I have sought to do in this volume.

In spite of the fact that Providence and Prayer have been so much written about, there is perhaps no realm of religion where more confusion in thought exists, and where misinterpretation is more common and more hurtful, than in the popular and prevailing conceptions of these two doctrines. It is with the hope not only of correcting in some degree these misconceptions, but of inspiring, along with the saner and truer views, a greater faith in the reality of Divine providence and the efficacy of human prayer, that I have written this volume. It is my judgment that this can be best done by treating the two doctrines as so fundamentally and vitally related to each other that neither of them can be clearly understood and rightly interpreted without considering them in their joint relations. It is only as I have succeeded in making the close and vital relationship existing between Providence and Prayer clear and convincing that I can hope to have been successful in expounding the doctrine of

moral and spiritual Power and in making plain and luminous the pathway that leads to its attainment.

I could have contented myself with bare footnote references to the best volumes which I have read in preparing this treatise, but that would have done the average reader little or no good. I have done better for my readers—and also, I am persuaded, for authors and publishers—by making here and there liberal quotations from books that I have read. There is not a one of these quotations that has not been selected with care because of the value of the thought it contains. And if I have yielded, as indeed I have, to the temptation to quote more than once from some of these books—as, for example, from the volumes titled “Providence, Divine and Human,” “The Meaning of Prayer,” “The Place of Prayer in the Christian Religion,” “The Power of Prayer,” “The Way to Peace, Health, and Power,” “Landmarks in the Struggle between Science and Religion,” “The Great Partnership,” “The Philosophy of the Christian Religion,” and other volumes—my readers will be justified in taking this to mean that I am commending these volumes to them as books which should be secured and read in their entirety.

I hereby acknowledge with thanks the courtesy of the publishers of “The International Standard Bible Encyclopædia” in permitting me to draw freely in this volume from my own contributions to that well-known work.

WILBUR FISK TILLET.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY,
September 25, 1926.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION—THE MEANING OF PROVI-
DENCE, PRAYER AND POWER

On any providential theory of the world we must believe that whereas nothing that we do can be done without the power being given us by God, he has yet given us a modicum of genuine causal activity which may be exercised in opposition even to himself. If men are possessed of a real freedom of initiative, our world at any given time cannot be described as the result solely of the Divine activity, but as the resultant of two forms of will—the Divine, all-holy will, which has made a world intended for good ends without admixture of moral evil, and the sum of human wills, which may be acting predominantly with or against God's will, according as they are good or evil. Only the *possibilities of good and evil* may be wholly ascribed to the Creator; the actualities are to be ascribed partly to his will and partly to the effects wrought by the free human wills which he has created.—*E. Griffith-Jones, in "Providence, Divine and Human."*

The highest form of prayer is not an attempt to cast a spell over the Almighty or to dictate terms to God, but the expression of a desire to be in tune with the Infinite and for a fuller realization of God's will on earth.—*D. M. Edwards, in "The Philosophy of Religion."*

The fruit of communion with God at its highest levels is power. From its most primitive to its most developed forms religion has been a search for power, a faith that there were untapped reservoirs of spiritual energy in the unseen. He who in worship becomes conscious of communing with the eternal God is able to report that he is endued with power from on high.—*E. S. Brightman, in "Religious Values."*

PROVIDENCE, PRAYER AND POWER

I

INTRODUCTION

AMONG the most fundamental ideas and doctrines of the Christian religion are the two designated by the familiar terms Providence and Prayer. Power, though not so closely associated with religion, is a term equally familiar and significant.

By the term Divine Providence we refer to all those important truths which concern God's government of the world and especially his government of rational and moral free agents. Providence is, whatever else it may or may not be, God's method of guiding and governing men.

The term Prayer refers to that cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion which teaches that man can, within certain limits and on certain divinely designated conditions, influence and control God. Prayer, whatever else it may or may not be, is man's divinely appointed method of governing God.

How God governs man, and how man may influence and within limits govern God, are, then, the two truths which in this volume we wish to study in their relation to each other and in their joint result when the two meet in the sphere of human life and personality.

When God's providence and man's prayers come together and work together in perfect harmony for the

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accomplishment of the same ends, the result in the realm of character and personality is power—moral and spiritual power. Nor is it possible for this kind of power to be attained or achieved in any other way than by the union of God's providence and man's prayers—the essence of prayer being found not in words, but in conscious conformity to and coöperation with the Divine will.

While God does much of his work in this world immediately and directly, most of the work which he does that is a manifestation of his power in the moral world is done through men who are at one and the same time his agents and self-determining free agents. But, while men are his instruments and agents, only believing and praying men are receivers, possessors, and distributors of his power, and to these alone is given the ability to transform that power into deeds of personal and moral value.

Providence, prayer, and power, therefore, constitute a triunity by virtue of which they sustain to each other essential relations and represent divine and human forces working together to produce results of transcendent importance in the realm of moral and spiritual values. Human life is best understood when it is regarded as a free covenant and copartnership between God and man. The Creator meant it to be such, and in his wisdom made it such. Although in this union God is the major partner, man is not to regard himself or to be regarded as silent and passive in this divine-human partnership. God, although infinite in privilege and power, has limited and conditioned himself in that he made human life to consist of this kind of copartnership.

If providence is not a Divine reality, then prayer is a vain and useless thing. If it be a reality, it still remains true that, if there be no believing and praying men and

women through whom God may work, then providence is not only limited, but, because it works through human instrumentalities, it can produce no results in the realm of divine-human activities. And, even though Divine providence and human prayer both represent realities and potential forces of unlimited possibilities, unless they work in harmony for the accomplishment of the same ethical ends, there can be no moral and spiritual power put forth for the achievement of results in the realm of religion and personality.

1. PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER DEFINED

The word "provide" (from the Latin *providere*) means etymologically to foresee. The corresponding Greek word (*pronoia*) means forethought. Forethought and foresight imply a future end, a goal, and presuppose a definite purpose and plan for attaining that end. The doctrine of final ends is a doctrine of final causes, and means that that which is last in realization and attainment is first in mind and thought. The most essential attribute of rational beings is that they act with reference to an end; they not only act with thought, but with forethought. As, therefore, it is characteristic of rational beings to make preparation for every event that is foreseen or anticipated, every result that is desired and worked for, the word "providence" has come to be used less in its original etymological meaning of foresight than to signify that preparation, care, and supervision which are necessary to secure the desired future result. While all rational beings exercise a providence proportioned to their knowledge and powers, yet it is only when the word is used with reference to the Divine Being, who is possessed of infinite knowledge and power, that it takes on its real and true significance. The doc-

trine of Divine providence, therefore, has reference to the preservation, care, and government which God exercises over all things that he has created, in order that they may accomplish the ends for which they were created. It concerns men both as individuals and as collected and organized into nations and governments.

The created universe may be conveniently divided, with reference to Divine providence, into three departments: first, the inanimate or physical universe, which is conserved or governed by God according to certain uniform principles called the laws of nature; secondly, animate existence, embracing the vegetable and animal world, over which God exercises that providential care which is necessary to sustain the life that he created; and, thirdly, the rational world, composed of beings who, in addition to animate life, are possessed of reason and moral free agency, and are governed by God, not by force or through power necessitating their action in a given way as things inanimate and irrational are governed, but freely, through an appeal to reason, they having the power to obey or disobey the laws of God according to the decision of their own free wills.

The Christian conception of Divine providence is thus defined by Dr. A. B. Bruce: "That God cares for man individually and collectively; that God's nature is such, and that he sustains such a relation to man as makes that care natural and creditable: that his care covers all human interests, but especially the higher, ethical interests—righteousness, goodness—in the individual and in society; that he is a moral Governor, and a benignant Father, a Power making for righteousness and overcoming evil with good; that he ruleth over all things with a view to establishing a kingdom of the good."¹

¹"The Providential Order," p. 6.

The doctrines of providence and prayer are vitally related to each other. To know what providence is, then, as it concerns man, we must know what prayer is. Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will. To be sincere and effective it must be accompanied by penitence for and confession of sin, and by faith and thanksgiving. Prayer is at once a privilege and a duty which every rational and moral creature owes to his Creator. The doctrine of prayer implies the dependence of the creature upon his Creator, and that the Creator conditions what he does for his creatures, within certain limits, upon their attitude toward him as expressed in their prayers. We say "within certain limits," for, as a matter of fact, much of what God does for his creatures is not conditioned on their prayers. Multitudes do not pray at all, and yet they are the constant recipients from God's hands of innumerable blessings which come to them no less than to those who do pray. Christ tells us that the Heavenly Father makes his sun to shine on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust. But there are many other blessings that are bestowed and can be bestowed only on those who seek to know and to do God's will, which means those who pray, and whose prayers meet all the conditions on which these blessings are bestowed.

If the distinction between general and special providence be recognized as legitimate and well-grounded, the relation between prayer and special providence will appear as peculiarly close and vital. The widespread care and supervision which God exercises over his created universe is commonly designated as his general providence, which embraces all created things, and concerns equally and alike, among moral creatures, the evil

and the good; in addition to which general providence there is a more special and particular providence which the Heavenly Father exercises over and in behalf of those whose willing wills are in accord with the Divine Will. That, however, which makes an individual an object of the special providence of which we here and now speak is not a discriminating act of favoritism and partiality on the part of God for the individual concerned. On the contrary, the determining factor in special providence, as we interpret it, is found in the free will of the individual in so far as and because he is continually seeking to know and to do the will of God. God can and does guide holy and obedient souls into the attainment of spiritual experiences and a blessed life of joyful service for others to an extent that is made impossible by the sinful wills of others who are wholly indifferent to his will. It thus appears that, if the thing that makes providence special is the individual's attitude of mind and heart and will toward God by virtue of which he is specially open to Divine suggestions and is specially responsive to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, then it is the praying soul—the sin-forsaking, truth-seeking, duty-loving child of God—that is heir to all that is most precious in the divine promises pertaining to special providence. And uppermost among these most precious things are divine guidance and other like moral and spiritual blessings.

2. THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDENCE AND THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN HUMAN LIFE

A correct understanding of the purpose and end of God's providential government of the world, as it applies to men individually and collectively, is the first thing to be sought in order to a clear presentation of this

most significant and fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. What then, let us ask, was the divine motive and supreme thought in the creation of the universe, and what the final cause and end of all things in the mind and purpose of God? If we can think God's thought after him and discover this "final cause" of creation, with even approximate accuracy, then we shall find a principle that will illuminate at least, if it does not fully explain, not only the methods but many of the mysteries of providence.

The Christian Scriptures comprehensively studied and rightly interpreted teach that the controlling thought in the mind of God in establishing this order of things, of which we are a conscious part, was to create a race of free moral beings who should find their highest happiness by being in the highest degree holy and who should in proportion as they attain their highest holiness and happiness, thereby in the highest degree glorify their Creator. The Creator's highest glory can be promoted only by such beings as are at once rational, moral, free, and holy. There are unconscious, unthinking, unmoral forms of existence, but the motive and meaning of the universe is to be found in the highest, in the rational and moral, not in the lower, the physical and animal. The lower exists for the higher; the material and animal exist for the spiritual and moral.

A being whose character is formed under the conditions and laws of intellectual and moral freedom is higher than any being can be that is what it is necessitatively—that is, by virtue of conditions over which it has no control. Character that is formed freely under God's government and guidance will glorify the Creator more than anything can which is made to be what it is wholly by Divine omnipotence. These things being true, it follows

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that God's providence in the world will be directed primarily and ceaselessly toward developing character in free moral agents, toward reducing sin to the minimum and developing the maximum of holiness, in every way and by every means compatible with perfect moral freedom in the creature.

The final cause and end, the purpose and motive, of Divine providence, then, are not to be sought and found in the temporal, material, and sensual happiness of men, but in the highest ultimate moral good of free beings whose highest happiness is secured through their highest holiness—which means, first, their freedom from sin; secondly, their conformity to the holy will of God as their Father; and, thirdly, their loving and self-sacrificing service to their fellow men. This ever-present and all-dominating moral purpose of Divine providence determines its methods, justifies the means employed for its realization, and explains, in part at least, what would otherwise be its mysteries. With this conception of Divine providence the general trend of Biblical thought is in entire accord.

In the light of Christ's revelation of God as a holy and loving Father who regards all men as his children, and whose chief concern is to develop personality through holiness and love in those whom he loves, we may define Divine providence in the realm of personality as Infinite Wisdom using infinite power to accomplish in free moral beings the ends of infinite holiness and love. The originating and determining cause of Divine providence, in the New Testament conception of it, is, as thus appears, always to be found in the love of God, while the final cause is the glory of the Father as realized in the holiness and happiness of his children. Whether we regard providence as related in its passing phases to

individuals and nations, or to its final goal in the consummation of the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven—that far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves—this ethical and spiritual purpose and end are always dominant and determinative of the Divine methods and agencies used to bring about the desired ends.

If our conceptions of prayer be correct—that it must be, in the aim and the end sought, in perfect harmony with God's providential purposes and ends—then it follows that when we have defined the latter we have also defined the former. This means that, however largely or meagerly things of temporal and material value may enter into the Christian believer's prayers, the burden of his prayers, the main object and emphasis in them, must be, not upon things physical and material and temporal, but upon things moral and spiritual as constituting life's true values and real riches, and upon things material only as they have directly or indirectly moral and spiritual significance and value.

Few authors have written more luminously and helpfully concerning prayer and providence in their relations to each other than Professor Wilhelm Bousset of the University of Goettingen. I quote from his little volume titled "The Faith of a Modern Protestant":

Prayer corresponds in the practical conduct of our religious life with the belief in the personal providence of God. Christianity is the religion of prayer; prayer is its crown and its pearl. Our faith in personal providence breathes and lives in prayer in which the reality that sustains us with its goodness is united with a Person whom we can address as "Thou." Prayer may be regarded above all else as listening to the will of God which is revealed to us as the personal appropriation of his providence. Only through prayer does the actual world with which God surrounds us become, as it were, clear to us. Chance is revealed as God's own design, and the apparently meaningless in life becomes full of meaning. Prayer and Divine providence are the two

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closely connected poles of our higher life dedicated to God, and one without the other is inconceivable. Thus prayer becomes a very serious and a very real thing. Prayer means that we penetrate through the outward appearances of things to the truth and to the real meaning of our life which springs from God. Thus, in this universal and broad sense of the word, prayer becomes a task of our life which we must never neglect. To pray is to lead our life under God's eyes and to accept our life from his hands. It is in this sense that the New Testament bids us "pray without ceasing." Prayer and Divine providence thus stand together as ebb and flow; our selfish obstinacy must dwindle away, the natural man must be checked, so that the eternal will of God by which he encompasses our whole being may stream in upon us.

3. POWER THE RESULT OF PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER WORKING IN UNISON

It follows from what we have said as to the true aim and end of both providence and prayer, the sphere and ministry of which are for man mainly in the moral and spiritual realm, that the kind of power that results from the union of providence and prayer is moral and spiritual. The power that belongs to personality in its highest development, far from being physical, is the possession and manifestation in man of those attributes and qualities that render the creature most like the Creator in whose image he was made.

If the line of thought followed in the preceding pages and the conclusion reached be true, it follows that when God's providence and man's prayers work in harmony and are directed to the same definite end, the resultant is a moral and spiritual power, a force and effect in bringing things to pass, which could not be but for the combination of the Divine and the human forces represented in providence and prayer. Analogies of this creation of a new force by and through combinations are found in many other spheres of nature and life. "Observation shows," says Professor E. S. Brightman in his volume

titled "Religious Values," "that what has been called the creative resultant occurs whenever the proper elements are brought together. Paint and the artist's utensils and the artist's soul produce a beauty which it would be fatuous to explain in terms of the crude material stuff which he employed. The creative resultant is a new whole which contains more than the elements which seemed to make it up. Many elements in our world lie side by side, mutually inert. On a study table are articles of metal and paper, wood and leather, ink and glass and rubber. They might lie there for decades and nothing might happen to them save the accumulation of dust. But if fire should come in contact with them, they would all be changed. Something new would be created—in this case something pitifully worthless. But if an organizing mind should use these same materials, adding to them what serves its purpose, then the new creation may be a thing of power and beauty, a drama or a poem. The elements thus combined obey an ideal will and assume a new form. In worship the elements that need to be brought together are the soul and God. When they are consciously and truly together, the miracle happens which no words can fully describe." This resultant miracle can only be described in terms of moral and spiritual power. He only who worships, who gets in touch with God and keeps in touch with him, has spiritual power adequate to meet life's manifold and varied needs.

Dr. E. M. Bounds, writing of "The Purpose of Prayer," says:

The possibilities of prayer are found in its allying itself with the purposes of God, for God's purposes and man's praying are the combination of all potent and omnipotent forces. "Until you have prayed," says Dr. A. J. Gordon, "you cannot do more than pray; but after you have prayed, you can do more than pray." To pray well is to do all

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things well. If the praying man does nothing but pray, he does nothing at all. To do nothing but pray fails to do the praying, for the antecedent, coincident, and subsequent conditions of prayer are but the sum of all the energized forces of a practical, working piety.

To understand the meaning of providence, prayer, and power, then, it is necessary that we interpret truly the deep meaning of personality, both human and Divine, and thinking God's thoughts after him, enter, as it were, into the very mind and eternal purpose of God in creating men, and into the very power-house of God's moral and spiritual universe. How the power stored therein may be released and used for the making of men and for the glory of the Creator, is a truth which God reveals only to those who seek in all sincerity to know and do his will.

To interpret and make known what providence is, and what it is not; what true prayer is, and what it is not; and what the power that comes from the union of providence and prayer is, and what it is not—this is the task which the author has assigned to himself in this volume. If this task should be successfully accomplished, the author cherishes the hope that this volume, although not meant to be primarily a book of devotion, will open up to truth-seeking and spiritual-minded readers the moral possibilities of prayer and the pathways to spiritual power.

PART ONE
DIVINE PROVIDENCE

CHAPTER TWO
THE BIBLICAL PRESENTATION OF THE DOC-
TRINE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—*Sermon on the Mount.*

THY Father knows thine every want;
No help he ever fails to grant
To them who seek his mind to know,
His will to do, his love to show:
He knows, he knows, thy Father knows,
And safe his child where'er he goes.

Thy Father sees thine every need,
His watchful eyes scan every deed;
Nor canst thou wander from his sight
Whose presence fills thy life with light:
He sees, he sees, thy Father sees,
And from all fear his child he frees.

Thy Father hears thine every cry,
His listening ears catch every sigh;
Nor canst thou call to him in vain
Whose power and love thy life sustain:
He hears, he hears, thy Father hears,
No prayer of faith escapes his ears.

Thy Father cares, he cares for thee,
However low thy lot may be;
However great, however small
Thy burdens be, he cares for all:
He cares, he cares, thy Father cares,
His children's burdens all he bears.

Thy Father loves with love so strong
Thy heart should bound with gladdest song,
For naught in life, death, depth, nor height
Can hide thee from his loving sight:
He loves, he loves, thy Father loves,
And safe his child where'er he moves.

W. F. T.

II

THE BIBLICAL PRESENTATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

THE word "providence" is used only once in the Scriptures (Acts 24: 2), and here it refers not to God but to the forethought and work of man, in which sense it is now seldom used. In the Epistle to the Romans (13: 14) the same Greek word is used, but it is there translated "provision." While, however, the Biblical use of the word calls for little consideration, the doctrine indicated by the term "providence" is one of the most significant in the Christian system, and is either distinctly stated or plainly assumed by every Biblical writer. The Old Testament Scriptures are best understood when interpreted as a progressive revelation of God's providential purpose for Israel and the world. Messianic expectations pervade the entire life and literature of the Hebrew people, and the entire Old Testament dispensation may not improperly be regarded as the moral training and providential preparation of the world, and especially of the chosen people, for the coming Messiah.

In the Apocryphal "Book of Wisdom" the word "providence" is twice used in reference to God's government of the world, and under circumstances full of suggestiveness as to the use of the term in the literature of that period of history. Referring to the mariner who ventures in his vessel upon the high seas, the writer says: "For verily the workman built the vessel by his skill; but thy providence, O Father, governs it. For thou hast made a way in the sea and a safe path in the waves,

showing that thou canst save from all danger, yea, though a man went to sea without art. Nevertheless, thou wouldst not that the works of thy wisdom should be idle, and, therefore, do men commit their lives to a small piece of wood, and, passing the rough sea in a weak vessel, are saved. For in the old time also, when the proud giants perished, the hope of the world, governed by thy hand, escaped in a weak vessel, and left to all ages a seed of generation" (14: 2-6; see also 17: 2).

Rabbinical Judaism, according to Josephus, was much occupied with discussing the relation of Divine providence to human free will. The Sadducees, he tells us, hold an extreme view of human freedom, while the Essenes were believers in absolute fate. The Pharisees, avoiding these extremes, believed in both the overruling providence of God and in the freedom and responsibility of man. (Ant. xiii. 5: 9; xviii. 1: 3.)

The New Testament writings begin with the declaration that the "kingdom of heaven is at hand," which declaration carries along with it the idea of a providential purpose and design running through the preceding dispensation that prepared for the Messiah's coming. But the work of Christ is set forth in the New Testament not only as the culmination of a Divine providence that preceded it, but the beginning of a new providential order, a definite and far-reaching plan, for the redemption of the world, a forethought and plan so comprehensive that it gives to the very idea of Divine providence a new, larger, and richer meaning both intensively and extensively than it ever had before. The minutest want of the humblest individual and the largest interests of the world-wide kingdom of God are both alike embraced within the scope of Divine providence as it is set forth by Christ and the apostles.

These general observations concerning the progressive revelation and record of the Biblical doctrine of providence prepare us for a more detailed consideration of the doctrine as it is brought out in the different types of literature that are found in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

1. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament Scriptures were written by men who believed, as did the entire Hebrew nation, in the existence, the power, and the active presence of a personal God in the ongoing of the world. To this deeply religious race God was no distant, indifferent, and silent spectator of the affairs of mankind, but an ever-interested and righteous participant in the doings of man and in the government of nations, and especially of the Israelitish nation. His providence, to their faith, was minute enough to take in the smallest details of individual life, and yet large and wide enough to embrace and comprehend the interests not only of Israel but of the whole world.

(1) Divine Providence in the Pentateuch

The opening sentence of the Scriptures—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"—is a noble and majestic affirmation of God's essential relationship to the origin of all things. It is followed by numerous utterances scattered throughout the sacred volume that declare that He who created also preserves and governs all that He created. But the Israelitish nation was from the beginning of its history, in the Hebrew conception, the special object of God's providence and care, though it was declared that Jehovah's lordship and government extended over all the earth: "I will sever in that day the land of Goshen in which my

people dwell . . . to the end thou mayest know that I am Lord in the midst of the earth!" (Ex. 8: 22.) The Deuteronomist uses language (10: 14-19) which implies that Divine possession of all things in heaven and earth, and especially of a chosen people, carries along with it the idea of Divine providence and control. He also testifies in striking language to the fact that Israel is Jehovah's peculiar possession and special care: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about; he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape." (Deut. 32: 8-14.) "Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude." (Deut. 10: 22.)

These are words not only of profound faith in Divine providence, but of marvelous poetic and metaphorical beauty. We cannot wonder that a people who began their career as a nation in their own land with such a consciousness of God and such a vision of his presence

and guiding hand in their history as these words indicate should become the elect servant of Jehovah among the nations, to interpret him in his spirituality, personality, and unity as no other nation of antiquity was able to do. This special providence that was over the elect nations as a whole was also minute and particular in that definite individuals were chosen to serve a providential purpose in the making of the nation, and were divinely guided in the accomplishment of their providential mission. Thus Abraham's providential place in history is set forth in these words: "Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites . . . to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous." (Neh. 9: 7, 8.) Jacob acknowledges the same providential hand in his life: "The God who hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which hath redeemed me from all evil." (Gen. 31: 42; 48: 15.)

The life of Joseph abounds in evidences of a Divine providence: "God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance"; "And now, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Gen. 45: 5, 7; 50: 20.) The whole life-history of Moses as it is found in the Pentateuch is a study in the doctrine of Divine providence. Other lives as set forth in these early narratives may be less notable, but they are not less indebted to Divine providence for what they are and for what they accomplish for others. Indeed, as

Professor Oehler remarks, "the whole Pentateuchal history of revelation is nothing but the activity of that Divine providence which, in order to the realization of the divine aim, is at once directed to the whole, and at the same time proves itself efficacious in the direction of the life of separate men, and in the guiding of all circumstances, especially in regard to all human helplessness."¹

(2) *Divine Providence in the Historical Books of the Old Testament*

In a sense all the books of the Old Testament are historical in that they furnish material for writing a history of the people of Israel. The Pentateuch, the Poetical books, the Wisdom Literature, the Prophets, all furnish material for writing Old Testament history; but there is still left a body of literature, including the books from Joshua to Esther, that may be with peculiar fitness designated as historical. These books are all in an important sense an interpretation and presentation of the facts of Hebrew history in their relation to Divine providence. The sacred historians undertake to give something of a divine philosophy of history, to interpret in a religious way the facts of history, to point out the evils of individual and national sin and the rewards and blessings of righteousness, and to show God's ever-present and guiding hand in human history, that he is not a silent spectator of human affairs, but the supreme moral Governor of the universe to whom individuals and nations alike owe allegiance. To the Hebrew historian every event in the life of the nation has a moral significance, both because of its relation to God and because of its bearing on the providential mission and testing of Israel as the people of God.

¹"Old Testament Theology," p. 175.

The eminent French Protestant preacher, Massillon, writing of Old Testament history, says: "God alone appears in this divine history; he is, I venture to say, its sole Hero. Kings and conquerors appear as the ministers of his will. These divine books at last lift the veil of providence. God, who hides himself in other events reported in our own histories, appears as revealed in these; and it is in this Book alone that we must learn to read the histories which men have left us."

Nowhere, perhaps, in the entire Old Testament can one find a clearer statement and better exhibition of the Hebrew conception of Divine providence than in the last two chapters of the Book of Joshua, where this aged leader of Israel, in the presence of the representatives of the twelve tribes, delivers his farewell message to his people, and reviews their past history from the time when Abraham parted company with their "fathers who dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time and served other gods," to that good day when, "old and stricken in age," he was ready to die. Said the aged and dying man: "Ye know, in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." And yet this marvelous survey of Israel's history, presented in proof of God's fidelity to his promises and his purposes, shows how all God's promises and providences are conditioned on the conduct and fidelity of his people, who may by their infidelity and sin turn blessings into curses. Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim stand ever over against each other, the one the symbol of punishment for wrongdoing and the other the symbol of blessing for deeds of righteousness.

The book of Judges, which covers the "dark ages" of

Bible history, and is an enigma to many in the study of God's hand in history, shows how low God must needs condescend at times in his use of imperfect and even sensual men through whom to reveal his will and accomplish his work in the world. God does his work in the world through whatever human agencies are at his command, and he has always used the best that were available. While, therefore, he condescends to use as instruments of his providence such men as Samson and Jephthah, it is never through these that he does his greatest and best work, but through an Abraham, a Joseph, a Moses, an Isaiah, through men of lofty moral character. And this is one of the most notable lessons of Old Testament history if it be studied, as it should be, as a progressive revelation of God's providential methods and instrumentalities.

Among these historical writers none has given clearer and stronger expression to God's providential relation to the physical world as its Preserver and to the moral world as its divine Guide and Governor than has Nehemiah: "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all. . . . Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go. Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them." (Neh. 9: 6, 19, 20.) These sentences reflect the views that were entertained by all the Old Testament historians as to God's hand in the government and guidance of the nation. Hebrew history,

because of the divine promises and divine providence, is ever moving forward toward the Messianic goal.

(3) *Divine Providence in the Psalms*

The poets are among the world's greatest religious teachers, and the theology of the best poets generally represents the highest and purest faith that is found among a people. Applying this truth to the Hebrew race, we may say that in the Psalms and the Book of Job we reach the high-water mark of the Old Testament revelation as to the doctrine of Divine providence. The Psalmist's God is not only the Creator and Preserver of all things, but a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, a Being so full of tender mercy and loving-kindness that we cannot fail to identify him with the God whom Christ taught us to call "our Father." Nowhere else in the entire Scriptures, except in the Sermon on the Mount, can we find such a full and clear exhibition of the minute and special providence of God over his faithful and believing children as in the Psalms—notably in such as the ninety-first, the one hundred and third and fourth, and the one hundred and thirty-ninth. The one hundred and fifth Psalm traces God's hand in providential and gracious guidance through every stage of Israel's wondrous history. Thanksgiving and praise for providential mercies and blessings abound in many of the Psalms.

While the relation of God's power and providence to the physical universe and to the material and temporal blessings of life is constantly asserted in the Psalms, yet it is the connection of God's providence with man's ethical and spiritual nature, with righteousness and faith and love, that marks the most notable characteristic of the Psalmist's revelation of the doctrine of providence. That righteousness and obedience are necessary condi-

tions and accompaniments of Divine providence in its moral aspects and results according to the Psalmist is evidenced by such declarations as these: "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (Ps. 1: 6.) "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man." (Ps. 31: 19, 20.) "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way." (Ps. 37: 23.) "For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth." (Ps. 74: 12.) "The Lord is a sun and a shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Ps. 84: 11.) "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Ps. 91: 1.) "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even forever." (Ps. 125: 1, 2.)

These and other utterances of the inspired poet make it plain that the purpose of Divine providence was not merely to meet temporal wants and bring earthly blessings, but to secure the moral good of individuals and nations. Perplexities were involved. In the seventy-third Psalm a righteous man confesses how the prosperity of the wicked had almost wrecked his faith, until he saw that the future in this life and in the life to come must be taken into consideration in any true estimate of Divine providence as related to human life. When he sees that in the end it will be well with the righteous, that God will guide him with his counsel and afterwards

receive him to glory, he is content with his lot and calmly leaves to God the ordering of life's devious ways. This thought, that God guides those who trust him and never guides them wrong, says Dean Church, is the keynote and distinguishing doctrine of the book of Psalms.

(4) *Divine Providence in the Wisdom Literature*

The doctrine of providence finds ample and varied expression in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, notably in the book of Proverbs. The Power that preserves and governs and guides is always recognized as inseparable from the Power that creates and commands. Divine providence does not work independently of man's free will. Providential blessings are conditioned on character and conduct. "The Lord hath made all things for himself." (Prov. 16: 4.) "The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool and rewardeth transgressors" (26: 10). "He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints" (2: 7, 8). "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (3: 11). "Keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in the way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. . . . For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (3: 21-26). "A good man obtaineth favor of the Lord" (12: 2). "There shall no evil happen to the just" (12: 21). "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps" (16: 9). "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (16: 33). "Man's goings are of the Lord" (20: 24). "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (21: 1). "The horse is prepared for bat-

tle, but safety is of the Lord" (21: 31). There can be no stronger statement of the doctrine of Divine providence in Old Testament terms of faith than that here given by the Wise Men of Israel.

The conception of providence that is presented in the book of Ecclesiastes seems to reflect the views of one who had had experience in sin and had come into close contact with many of life's ills. All things have their appointed time, but the realization of the providential purposes and ends of creaturely existence is, wherever human free agency and choice are involved, always conditioned upon man's exercise of his free will. The God of providence rules and overrules, but he does not by his omnipotence overpower and override and destroy man's true freedom of will. Things that are do not, as they are, represent God's perfect providence, but rather reflect his providence as affected by human free agency and as marred by man's sin. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. . . . I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made everything beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. . . . Every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor; it is the gift of God." (Eccles. 3: 1, 10, 11, 13.) "The righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God" (9: 1). "The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong" (9: 11). The same conclusion that the author of Ecclesiastes reached as to how human life is affected by Divine providence and man's sin has found expression in the oft-quoted lines of the greatest of modern poets:

“There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.”

(5) *Divine Providence in the Book of Job*

The greatest of all the inspired contributions to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, the book of Job, is so largely devoted to a discussion of the doctrine of providence that it demands special consideration. It is the one book in the Bible that is devoted wholly to a discussion of Divine providence. The perplexities of a thoughtful mind on the subject of Divine providence and its relation to human suffering have nowhere in the literature of the world found stronger and clearer expression than in this inspired drama which bears the name of its unique and marvelous hero, Job.

Job represents not only a great sufferer, but an honest doubter: he dared to doubt the theology of his day, a theology which he had himself doubtless believed until experience, the best of all teachers, taught him its utter inadequacy to explain the deepest problems of human life and of Divine providence. The purpose of this book in the inspired volume seems to be to correct the prevailing theology of the day with regard to the subject of sin and suffering in their relation to Divine providence. There is no more deplorable and hurtful error that a false theology could teach than that all suffering in this world is a proof of sin and a measure of one's guilt. It is hard enough for the innocent to suffer. To add to their suffering by teaching them that it is all because they are awful sinners, even though their hearts assure them that they are not, is to lay upon the innocent a burden too grievous to be borne. The value in the inspired canon of a book written to reveal the error of such a misleading doctrine of Divine providence as this cannot be easily overestimated. The invaluable contribution which this

book makes to the Biblical doctrine of providence is to be found, not in individual and detached sayings, striking and suggestive as some of these may be, but rather in the book as a whole. Statements concerning God's general providence abound in this inspired drama—such as these, for example: "Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." (Job 12: 9, 10.) "Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world? . . . He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead." (Job 34: 13, 24.)

But the special contribution of the book of Job to the doctrine of Divine providence, as already indicated, is to set forth its connection with the fact of sin and suffering. Perplexed souls in all ages have been asking: If God be all-powerful and all-good, why should there be any suffering in a world which he created and over which he rules? If he cannot prevent suffering, is he omnipotent? If he can but will not prevent suffering, is he infinitely good? Does the book solve the mystery? We cannot claim that it does. But it does vindicate the character of God, the Creator, and of Job, the moral free agent under trial. It does show the place of suffering in a moral world where free agents are forming character; it does show that perfect moral character is made not by Divine omnipotence, but by trial, and that physical suffering serves a moral end in God's providential government of men and nations. While the book does not clear the problem of mystery, it does show how on the dark background of a suffering world the luminous holiness of Divine and human character may be revealed. The picture of this suffering man of Uz, racked with

bodily pains and irritated by the ill-spoken words of good-meaning friends, planting himself on the solid rock of his own conscious rectitude, and defying earth and hell to prove him guilty of wrong, and knowing that his Vindicator liveth and would come to his rescue—that is an inspired picture that will make every innocent sufferer who reads it stronger until the end of time.

“There can be little doubt,” says Dr. A. B. Bruce, “that the Church would gain much from the exercise within her borders of a freedom in discussing topics related to the character and providence of God similar to those so splendidly exemplified in the Book of Job.”

Nowhere perhaps in all English literature has a higher tribute been paid to both the moral qualities and the literary value of this book than by Thomas Carlyle in his “Heroes and Hero Worship,” which is in part as follows:

“A noble book, all men’s book. It is our first and oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man’s destiny, and God’s way with him here in this earth. And all in such free, flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation, oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind—so soft and great, as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars. There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.”

(6) *Divine Providence in the Prophetical Writings*

Nowhere in all literature is the existence and supremacy of a moral and providential order in the world more clearly recognized than in the writings of the Old Testament prophets. These writings are best under-

stood when interpreted as the moral messages and passionate appeals of men who were not only prophets and preachers of righteousness to their times, but students and teachers of the moral philosophy of history, men of vision who interpreted all events in the light of their bearing on this moral and providential order, in which Divine order the Israelitish nation had no small part, and over which Israel's God was Sovereign. "The theater of Providence with the Hebrew prophets," says Dr. A. B. Bruce, "was this present world, and the drama of history an effective, if not a perfect, demonstration of Divine righteousness."

While each prophetic message takes its coloring from the political, social, and moral conditions that called it forth, and therefore differs from every other message, the prophets are all one in their insistence upon the supremacy and divine authority of this moral order, and in their looking forward to the coming of the Messiah and the setting up of the Messianic kingdom as the providential goal and consummation of the moral order. They all describe in varying degrees of light and shade a coming time when One born of their own oppressed and downtrodden race should come in power and glory and set up a kingdom of righteousness and love in the earth, into which kingdom all nations shall be ultimately gathered, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. God's providential government of the nation was always and everywhere directed toward this Messianic goal.

"The personality of the prophets," says Dr. James Strahan, "was the power by which God raised Israel's moral and spiritual life; their religious consciousness was the medium of his self-revelation; and theirs is the praise if the Old Testament is the story of a long trust in God and in truth without a parallel and crowned by

the hope of the advent of Christ. The rise of the prophets as the unique and differentiating factor in the spiritual life of the nation, can only be explained on the hypothesis that the history of Israel, from its beginning onward, was suffused and guided by the presence of God. But for her special prophetic education, Israel would have had much the same kind of history that her Semitic neighbors had."

The language which an inspired writer puts into the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, the heathen king, is an expression, not so much of the Gentile conception of God and his government as it is of the faith of a Hebrew prophet concerning God's relationship to men and nations: "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4: 35.) The providential blessings which the prophets promise to the people, whether to individuals or to the nation, are never a matter of mere omnipotence or favoritism, but are inseparably connected with righteous conduct and holy character. The blessings promised are mainly spiritual; but whether spiritual or material, they are always conditioned on righteousness. Although the following quotations are taken exclusively from a single prophet, Israel's greatest seer, they represent the spirit and teachings of all as to the place of moral conduct and character in God's providential government of the world, the supreme purpose and end of which is to establish a kingdom of righteousness in the earth.

"Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppression, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high;

his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his waters shall be pure." (Isa. 33: 13, 15, 16.) "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (35: 8-10). "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (43: 2). "And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you" (46: 4). "The Lord will go before you and the God of Israel will be your rereward" (52: 12). "In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (54: 14, 17).

The fortieth chapter of Isaiah is a poetic and marvelously beautiful interpretation of Divine providence: if inanimate nature and the life of beast and bird are sustained by the never-failing power of the Creator, surely, argues the prophet, man who bears the image of his Maker need not fear that he will be overlooked and left uncared for by Him who fainteth not, neither is weary. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

(7) *Divine Providence as Portrayed in Apocalyptic Literature*

Another type of literature found in the Old Testament, and one which is akin to but distinguishable from the Prophetic, is the Apocalyptic. There are Apocalyptic

sections found in several of the Prophetic books (for example, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, and Zechariah). "The parent of Apocalyptic literature," says Dr. Shailer Mathews, "is the book of Daniel, which, by the almost unanimous consent of scholars, appeared in the Maccabean period. In the apocalypse we can see a union of the symbolism of Babylonia with the religious faith of the Jews under the influence of Hellenistic culture. By its very origin it was the literary means of setting forth by the use of symbols the certainty of Divine judgment and the equal certainty of Divine deliverance. The symbols are usually animals of various sorts, but frequently composite creatures whose various parts represented certain qualities of the animals from which they were derived. Employing allegorically an elaborate machinery of symbol, chief among which were sheep, bulls, and birds, and assuming the name of some worthy long-since dead, the apocalypticist rewrote the past in terms of prophecy in the name of some hero or seer of Hebrew history. Each apocalypse is marked by a strange combination of pessimism as to the present and hope as to the future yet to be miraculously established."¹

The book of Daniel, whether it be interpreted as literal history, after the long prevalent method of traditional theology, or symbolically and apocalyptically, after the method of modern Biblical scholars, is equally valuable as a study of Divine providence. The wonderful miracles described in this book as being wrought in behalf of Daniel and the three Hebrew children, and for the preservation of God's chosen people, the Hebrew nation, against whom Antiochus Epiphanes, the prototype of the Antichrist, and all the powers of darkness are arrayed, are scarcely equaled anywhere else in the Bible.

¹See article in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.

But, however much Biblical scholars may differ in their interpretation of this wonderful book, all alike agree that it is divinely inspired to teach lessons of the greatest possible value for all ages concerning God's providential government of men and nations.

Much of what is here said of the apocalyptic literature of the Old Testament applies also to the book of Revelation in the New Testament. Apocalypses were written in an age of persecution and were designed both to conceal and to reveal—to conceal from the enemy, while giving to the persecuted saints comforting assurances of deliverance from impending evil. If the wonderful miraculous symbolism of the Biblical apocalypses be interpreted in terms of a providential, as distinct from a supernatural, exercise of Divine power in behalf of the righteous, no type of Old Testament literature furnishes more evidence than the Apocalypse as to God's guiding hand in the lives of men and the government of nations.

2. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

However much the Old Testament abounds in rich and varied material for the study of the doctrine of providence, it is only when we pursue this study in the light and literature of the New Testament that we are able to construct a thoroughly consistent and satisfactory doctrine. When Christ teaches that God's nature is love, and his relation to us is that of a Father, and that all his dealings with his children as moral free agents made in his image are designed to secure, above all things else, their freedom from sin, their holiness and their usefulness—and when he teaches further that his own highest glory is secured in and through the holiness of his children—he reveals a doctrine of providence

which, though it may not remove all mysteries and perplexities, is yet rational and self-consistent. It is a doctrine which those who are seeking not mere creature happiness and earthly good, but the kingdom of God and his righteousness, will find satisfying and full of comfort to both mind and heart.

(1) *Divine Providence in the Gospels*

The Gospels furnish the richest possible material for a study of the doctrine of Divine providence. They recognize in the advent of Christ the fulfillment of a long line of Messianic prophecies and the culmination of providential purposes and plans that had been in the Divine mind from the beginning, and awaited the fullness of time for their revelation in the incarnation. (Matt. 1: 22; 2: 5, 15; 3: 3.) In his private and personal life of service and prayer Christ is a model of filial trust in the providence of the Heavenly Father. (Matt. 11: 25; 26: 39; Mark 1: 35; 6: 46; Luke 3: 21; 11: 1.) His private and public utterances abound in declarations concerning God's ever-watchful and loving care for all his creatures, but above all for those creatures who bear his own image, while his teachings concerning the kingdom of God reveal a Divine providential plan for the world's redemption and education extending of necessity far into the future; and still beyond that, in his vision of Divine providence, comes a day of final judgment, of retribution and reward, followed by a new and eternal order of things, in which the destiny of every man will be determined by his conduct and character in this present life.¹

¹See our Lord's parables concerning the kingdom: Matthew 13: 24-50; Mark 4: 26; Luke 14: 15. Also the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew entire.

The following utterances of our Lord found in the Synoptic Gospels contain the most essential and precious of all the New Testament revelations concerning the providence of the Heavenly Father:

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matt. 5: 45.) “Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek); for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” (Matt. 6: 26-34.) “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matt. 10: 29-31.) “And some of you shall they cause to be put to death; and ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish.” (Luke 21: 16-18.)

Till the end of time these words of our Lord (which we must needs quote over and over again in this volume) will remain the completest and most perfect statement of the Christian doctrine of Divine providence ever uttered; and will be regarded by Christian believers as the most satisfying and comforting expression of the Heavenly Father’s love and care for his children that ever came from human lips or the heart of God. Without these words it is inconceivable that the Christian religion could ever have been what it has been and now is to the children of men.

St. John's Gospel differs from the Synoptic Gospels in its mode of presenting the doctrine of providence chiefly in that it goes back to the mind and purpose of God in the very beginning (John 1: 1-5), whereas the Synoptic Gospels simply go back to the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Both the Gospel and the Epistles of John, in their presentation of Divine providence, place the greatest possible emphasis on Divine love and filial trust, the latter rising in many places to the point of positive assurance. The book of Revelation is a prophetic vision, in apocalyptic form, of God's providential purpose for the future, dealing not so much with individuals as with nations and with the far-reaching movements of history extending through the centuries. God is revealed in St. John's writings not so much as an omnipotent Sovereign as the all-loving Father, who not only cares for his children in this life, but is building for them in the world to come a house of many mansions. (John 14: 1-20.)

(2) *Divine Providence in Acts and Other New Testament History*

The historical portions of the New Testament, as contained in the Acts, and elsewhere, while not eliminating or depreciating the element of human freedom in individuals and nations, yet recognize in human life and history the ever-present and all-controlling mind of that God in whom, it is declared, "we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17: 28.) God's providence meets with loving care man's physical needs: "Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (Acts 14: 17.) The career of the first distinctive New

Testament character begins with these words: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." But not only John, the forerunner, but every other individual, according to the New Testament conception, is a man "sent from God." The apostles concede themselves to be such; Stephen, the martyr, was such; Paul was such. New Testament biography is a study in providentially guided lives, not omitting references to those who refuse to be so guided. For many who are "sent from God" refuse to go upon their divinely appointed mission—such is the power and the peril of free agency. The day of Pentecost is the revelation of a new power in history—a revelation of the place and power which the divine-human Christ and the Holy Spirit are to have henceforth in making history—in making the character of the men and the nations whose deeds are to make history. The most potent moral force in history is to be, from the day of Pentecost on, the ascended incarnate Christ—and he is to be all the more influential in the world after his ascension, when his work will be done through the Holy Spirit. This is the historical view of providence as connected with the person of Christ, which the New Testament historians present, and which we, after nineteen centuries of Christian history, are warranted in holding more confidently and firmly even than the Christians of the first century could hold it.

(3) Divine Providence in the Epistles of St. Paul

No character of whom we have any account in Christian literature was providentially prepared for his life work and providentially guided in accomplishing that life work, more truly than was the Apostle Paul. Some providential aspects of his character and life will be considered in a later chapter. His speeches and writings,

just as we would antecedently expect, abound in proofs of his absolute faith in the overruling providence of an all-wise God. His doctrine of predestination and foreordination is best understood when interpreted, not as a Divine power predetermining human destiny and nullifying the human will, but as an interpretation of Divine providence revealing the eternal purpose of God to accomplish an end contemplated and foreseen from the beginning—viz., the redemption of the world and the creation in and through Christ of a new and holy humanity. Every one of the Pauline Epistles bears witness to the author's faith in a Divine providence that overrules and guides the life of every soul that works in harmony with the Divine will; but this providence, as he understands it, is working to secure as its chief end, not material and temporal blessings, but the moral and spiritual good of those concerned. Paul's teachings concerning Divine providence as it concerns individuals and is conditioned on character may be found summed up in what is perhaps the most comprehensive single sentence concerning providence that was ever written: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8: 28.) Any true exposition of the New Testament doctrine of Divine providence that may be given can but be an unfolding of the content of this brief but comprehensive statement. The greatest of the Pauline Epistles, that to the Romans, is a study in the divine philosophy of history, a revelation of God's providential purpose and plan concerning the salvation not merely of individuals but of the nations and of the whole world. God's providential purposes, as Paul views them, whether they concern individuals or the entire race, are always associated with the medi-

atorial ministry of Christ: "For of him and through him and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever and forever." (Rom. 11: 36.)

(4) *Divine Providence in the Petrine Epistles and Other New Testament Writings*

The Epistles of Peter, James, and Jude, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, are all in entire accord with the teachings of the other New Testament writings already considered. Peter, who at first found it so hard to see how God's providential purpose in and for the Messiah could be realized if Christ should suffer and die, came later to see that the power and the glory of Christ and his all-conquering gospel are inseparably connected with the sufferings and death of the Messiah. No statement concerning God's providence over the righteous can be clearer or stronger than the following utterances found in First Peter: "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?" (3: 12). The purpose and end of Divine providence as viewed in the Epistle of James are always ethical; as conduct and character are the end and crown of Christian effort, so they are the aim and end of Divine providence as it coöperates with men to make them perfect. (Jas. 1: 5, 17, 27; 2: 5; 5: 7.) The apologetic value of the Epistle to the Hebrews grows out of the strong proof it presents that Christ is the fulfillment not only of the Messianic prophecies and expectations of Israel, but of the providential purposes and plans of that God who at sundry times and in divers manners had spoken in times past unto the fathers by a long line of prophets (1: 1, 2; 11: 7-40; 13: 20, 21). It would be difficult to

crowd into one short chapter a more comprehensive study of the lessons of history that illustrate the workings and the retributions of the moral law under Divine providence than is found in the Epistle of Jude. (See especially verses 5, 7, 11, 14, 15, 24.)

(5) *Divine Providences as Revealed in the Incarnation*

In the incarnation of Christ God finds his wisest, most gracious, and most effective method of accomplishing the one great purpose and final end of his providence—namely, the development of free beings whose highest ultimate happiness will be attained through holiness in character and a life of altruistic service. The highest glory that can come to the Creator, Preserver, and loving Father of men will come from those of his creatures who in their freedom and through his grace, realize this end of their being. It is in and through the divine-human Christ—through his example and teachings and especially through his revelation of the heart of the Heavenly Father—that God brings to bear upon free moral beings created in his own image the strongest moral influence and motive for right doing that is compatible with free agency. The incarnate Christ, because he brings God near, and keeps him near, and makes him intelligible and lovable, becomes himself, by what he is and says and does, the perfect revealer of such a God of providence as all the world needs.

“God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible,” says Macaulay, “attracted few worshipers. A philosopher might admire so noble a conception, but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which presented no image to their minds. It was before Deity embodied in human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weep-

ing over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue and the doubts of the Academy, and the pride of the Portico and the fasces of the lictors, and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust."

We are warranted, therefore, in saying that the life and work, and the suffering and death of the Divine-human Christ, exemplify and explain as nothing else can the nature and method and purpose of the Heavenly Father's providence in and with and through his children. For Christ came to reveal God's wise and good providence just as truly as to reveal the divine Person of the Father. Not only from Christ's lips, but even more perfectly from his life, do we learn what God's providence is, and what it is not.

3. THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINES OF PROVIDENCE COMPARED

From this brief survey of the teachings of the Old and New Testament Scriptures concerning the doctrine of Divine providence it will be seen that, while the New Testament reaffirms in most particulars this doctrine as set forth in the Old Testament, there are three particulars in which the points of emphasis are changed, and by which new and changed emphasis the doctrine is greatly enriched.

First, we note that there is a new emphasis on the Fatherhood and love of God. The God of providence in the Old Testament is regarded as a Sovereign whose will is to be obeyed, and his leading attributes are omnipotence and holiness, whereas in the New Testament God is revealed as the Heavenly Father and his providence is set forth as the forethought and care of a Father for his children. There is no less of holiness and power than

before, but his omnipotence is now made to appear as the omnipotence of holy Love. Indeed, he is Love itself in personal form. To teach that God is not only a righteous Ruler to be feared and obeyed and adored, but a tender and loving Father who is ever thinking of and caring for his children, is to make God lovable and to turn his providence into an administration of almighty love.

Secondly, Christ and the Holy Spirit are now associated with the doctrine of providence as could not of course have been possible before the New Testament dispensation began. If it be true, as some theologians have taught, that "God the Father plans, God the Son executes, and God the Holy Ghost applies," then it would follow that the carrying out of the providential plans of the Triune God is the work exclusively of Christ and the Holy Spirit. This theological formula, however, while it has suggestive value, cannot be accepted as an altogether accurate and complete statement of the New Testament doctrine with reference to Divine providence. Christ constantly refers creation and providence to the Father. But he also said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," and the New Testament writers attribute to Christ the work of both creation and providence. Thus Paul: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. 1: 16, 17.) Although this and other passages refer to Christ's relation to general providence, including the government of the physical universe, yet it is only when the Divine government is concerned with the redemption of a lost world and the

establishment of the kingdom of God in the hearts and lives of men, that the full extent of Christ's part in Divine providence can be realized. The saving and perfecting of men is the supreme purpose of providence if it be viewed from the New Testament standpoint of Christ's mediatorial ministry.

Thirdly, there is in the New Testament a new emphasis on moral and spiritual blessings. The New Testament not only subordinates the material and temporal aspects of providence to the spiritual and eternal more than does the Old Testament, but Christ and the Apostles, to an extent that finds no parallel in the Old Testament, place the emphasis of their teachings concerning providence upon the transcendent value of the soul as compared with the body, upon man's moral needs and eternal interests, and upon the kingdom of God and his righteousness, the establishment of which in the hearts and lives of men is the one great object for which both the Heavenly Father and his children are ceaselessly working. To be free from sin, to be holy in heart and useful in life, to love and obey God as a Father, to love and serve men as brothers—this is the ideal and the end for which, according to the New Testament, men should work, and this is the end toward which God is working in ceaseless watchfulness and love.

"The virtue of prosperity," says Lord Bacon in one of his essays, "is temperance; the virtue of adversity is fortitude. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearselike airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the

felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries that it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground. Judge, therefore, of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly, virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant where they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover and reveal vice, but adversity doth best discover and reveal virtue."

This survey of the teachings of the sacred Scriptures concerning Divine providence, while by no means removing its difficulties and perplexities, cannot fail to strengthen the faith of those who believe that this world in which we live and move and have our being, owes both its origin and its continued existence to a Being who is infinite in power, wisdom, goodness, and love. Faith in Divine providence pervades the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. In writing of the Biblical doctrine of providence, in his volume titled "Man's Partnership with Divine Providence," Dr. John Telford says:

A belief in Divine providence lies at the root of all religion. The nobler and truer religion becomes, the more prominence does it give to the providence of God. Christian believers are not blind to the difficulties which surround a subject so vast and complex as that of God's provision for and oversight of every living thing. Yet these difficulties do not destroy faith in Divine providence. They often test it sorely; but if it be rooted in strong conviction of God's power and goodness, the belief will emerge from these tests with new force and compass.

Among all the great hymns of the Christian Church that sing of the Heavenly Father's loving and watchful care over his children none perhaps is so thoroughly Biblical in the language used as that beginning "How firm a

foundation, ye saints of the Lord"—indeed its phraseology is almost an exact reproduction of words found in the Old and New Testaments. After declaring that "e'en down to old age God's people shall prove his sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love," it reaches the climax in the last verse which is based on Hebrews 13: 5, "For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and speaks of the security of "the soul that on Jesus still leans for repose."

In the writing of this great Christian lyric the Old Testament prophet, the New Testament apostle, and the English poet of modern times have all done their best to comfort human hearts with the precious assurance of God's never-failing presence in every phase of life's manifold and varied experiences. Christian biography is full of tributes to its power to sustain and comfort souls alike in the storm and stress of life and in the quiet hours of meditation and worship. To the truth of this statement the following incident bears striking testimony:

One of the most notable services that used to be held at Princeton Theological Seminary was the still hour of devotion on Sabbath afternoon in the old oratory. As conducted by the elder Dr. Charles Hodge it was made especially memorable and impressive. On one occasion after a tender, loving talk to the theological students, as of an aged father to his children whom he must soon leave, he undertook to read this hymn. But his eyes filled with tears, and his voice utterly failed him as he came to the closing stanza. When he reached the very last line he paused; all that he could do in the depth of his emotion was to look through his tears at his boys and with a gesture of pathetic and adoring wonder at the matchless grace of God in Christ—a gesture far more expressive and impressive than any words could be—his hand silently beat time to the sacred rythm which they all understood and now so deeply felt:

"That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, *no, never*, NO, NEVER forsake!"

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE
DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER VIEWS

The world is controlled and guided not by a vague principle, nor by an unconscious will, but by a Being who is the one perfect and holy Person by whom all things were created, by whom they are sustained from moment to moment, and whose highest attribute is Holy Love. The word "Providence" loses all its spiritual content if conceived of as a mere system of laws, or a bare and soulless drive of forces. It implies a full and perfect Personality as the ground of all existence, whose goodness is over all his works, whose will is being fulfilled in the movement of events, and with whom we, as spiritual beings, are capable of coming into personal relationship. On this theistic basis alone can we build a doctrine of providence in any real sense. . . . The modern view of God as a half-blind Demiurge, pushing his way into something like clear though partial self-consciousness in man, is inconsistent with the Christian view of providence, and is the fruit of a debased anthropomorphism which thinks of God as a magnified and nonnatural man, himself the creature of his worshipers.—*E. Griffith-Jones, in "Providence, Divine and Human."*

To the minnow every cranny and pebble and quality and addicent of its little native creek may have become familiar; but does the minnow understand the ocean tides and periodic currents, the trade winds, and monsoons, and moon's eclipses; by all which the condition of its little creek is regulated, and may, from time to time (unmiraculously enough), be quite overset and reversed? Such a minnow is man: his creek this planet earth; his ocean the immeasurable All; his monsoons and periodic currents the mysterious course of Providence through æons of æons.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

III

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER VIEWS

THERE are four distinct conceptions of providence as it concerns God's relation to the ongoing of the world and to man, the rational and moral free agent whom he has placed upon it: the Atheistic, the Pantheistic, the Deistic, and the Theistic or Biblical view. The last-named view can be best understood only when stated in comparison and contrast with these opposing views.

"Let us begin, then," said Plato, "by asking whether all this which men call the universe is left to the guidance of an irrational and random chance, or, on the contrary, as our fathers declared, is ordered and governed by a marvelous Intelligence and Wisdom."

1. THE ATHEISTIC CONCEPTION

Atheism, or materialism, stands at one extreme, affirming that there is no God, that the material universe is eternal, and that from material atoms, eternally endowed with certain properties, there have come, by a process of purely natural evolution, all existing forms of vegetable, animal, and rational life. As materialism denies the existence of a personal Creator, it of course denies any and every doctrine of Divine providence. Matter and its properties, nature and its laws, constitute the only known "God." Materialists affirm that it is as easy to think that matter is self-existent and eternal as that something back of and before matter—a "Somewhat," which men have called "God"—is self-existent and eternal; and hence that it is more rational to stop

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with the known and knowable than to place the difficulty only one step farther back, as theists do in assuming a great personal First Cause. All of which might be admitted as true, if God were unknown and unknowable and his existence an unwarranted assumption. But, if it be true, as theists claim, that God can be known—that he has been known and is known in the spiritual consciousness of men—and that his existence and power and presence can be so far predicated and proved by reason as to make it more unreasonable to deny than to admit his existence, thus making the difficulties of infidelity more serious and more numerous than the difficulties of theistic faith—if this be true, then it follows that theism, with its faith in a personal God, is more rational than atheism. And of course it follows that, if God be nothing but a creation of the imagination, prayer addressed to a Nonentity is not only useless and vain; it is irrational.

Even Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor and Stoic philosopher, saw and said: "This world is either a welter of alternate combination and dispersion or a unity of order and providence. If the former, why do I care about anything else than how I shall at last become earth? But, on the other alternative, I reverence, I stand steadfast, I find heart in the Power that disposes all."

And Voltaire, the noted French freethinker, said: "If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent such a Being." Man needs God in order to explain the universe; otherwise we should be living in intellectual chaos. It is immeasurably more difficult to explain the universe without God than with him—such is the comment of a thoughtful writer on Voltaire's words.¹

¹J. A. MacCallum, in "The Great Partnership."

2. THE PANTHEISTIC CONCEPTION

Pantheism stands at the other extreme from atheism, teaching that God is everything, and everything is God. The created universe is "the living garment" of God. God is the soul of the world, the universe his existence form. But God in the pantheistic conception is an infinite It, not a personal Being who can express his existence in terms of self-consciousness, I, Thou, He. Pantheism differs from materialism only in the name which it gives to the infinite substance from which all things evolve. According to pantheism, God and matter, the Creator and the creature, the Infinite and the finite, the Divine and the human, are not only inseparable, but identical, in that they are in their real essence one and the same. A certain substance may take different forms, and you may call it water, or ice, or snow, or vapor, or rain, or steam, or dew, or mist, or the river, or the lake, or the ocean—but, in its last analysis, it is all virtually one and the same thing, water. So God and man and matter are all one. Providence, in pantheistic thought, can only mean the evolution of that impersonal something that constitutes the essence of the universe. This means of course a denial of any and all providence in the theistic and Christian sense of that term. Pantheism affirms the immanence of Deity; but, in denying his transcendence and personality, it robs the Divine immanence of any and all ethical significance and character which can only be predicated of a divine Existence that is at once personal and transcendent and immanent.

And if providence is meaningless it also follows that—as Canon McComb has well said: "Prayer is logically impossible on a pantheistic basis. For if God is to be identified with the totality of men and things, and we are simply modes of his being, related to him as a drop

to the ocean, it is obvious that conscious fellowship between him and us is a contradiction in terms. If prayer is, as all experience confirms, a dialogue, an intercourse of the human with the Divine, man must be able to say both 'I' and 'Thou.' Here then is the vital question, Is God personal? Does he know himself, and is he able to communicate his being and thought to other spirits? If so, the familiar line of Tennyson expresses the ultimate truth:

'Speak to Him thou, for he hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet.
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet.'

3. THE DEISTIC CONCEPTION

Deism teaches that a personal God created all things and endowed them with whatever qualities they possess, but created things are autonomous; they do not need the Creator's presence and the exercise of his divine power to continue in existence and fulfill their functions. The material world is placed under immutable law, while man, the rational and moral free agent, is left to do as he wills. God sustains very much the same relation to the universe that the clock maker does to his time-piece. Having made his clock, and wound it up, he does not need to interfere with it, and the longer it can run without the maker's intervention, the greater the evidence of wisdom and skill on the part of the maker. God, according to deism, has never wrought a miracle nor made a supernatural revelation to man. The only religion that is possible to man is natural religion: he may reason from nature up to nature's God. The only value of prayer is its subjective influence; it helps us to answer our own prayers, to become and be what we are praying to be, and to bring to pass that which we are praying to have accomplished. If the Divine Being is

a prayer-hearing God, he is at least not a prayer-answering God. The laws of nature constitute God's general providence; but there is no other personal and special providence than this, according to deism. God, say they, is too great, too distant, too transcendent a Being to concern himself with the details of creaturely existence.

"As against deism," says Dr. Borden P. Bowne, "we hold that the world is no self-centered reality independent of God, but is simply the form in which Divine purpose realizes itself. It has no laws of its own which oppose a bar to Divine purpose, but all its laws and on-goings are but the expression of that purpose. Hence the system of law is itself absolutely sensitive to the Divine purpose, so that what the Divine purpose demands finds immediate expression and realization not in spite of the system, but through the system."

4. THE THEISTIC OR BIBLICAL CONCEPTION

The theistic or Biblical conception of providence can now be the more clearly stated in view of these distinctions that have been made. Theism teaches that God is not only the Creator but the Preserver of the universe, and that the preservation of the universe, no less than its creation, implies and necessitates at every moment of time an omnipotent and omnipresent personal Being. This world is not "governed by the laws of nature," as deism teaches, but it is "governed by God, according to the laws of nature." "Law," in itself, is an impotent thing, except as it is the expression of a free will or person back of it; "the laws of nature" are meaningless and impotent, except as they are an expression of the uniform mode, according to which God preserves and governs the world. It is customary to speak of the laws of nature as if they were certain self-existent, au-

tomatic forces or powers governing the world. But shall we not rather say that there is no real cause except personal will—either the Divine will or created wills? If this be true, then it is inconsistent to say, as deists do, that God has committed the government of the physical universe to “secondary causes”—that is, to the laws of nature—and that these laws are not immediately dependent upon him for their efficiency, indeed, that they can and do, after being once set in operation, continue to work as it were of themselves without immediate and necessary dependence on their Creator. On the contrary, the omnipresent and ever-active God is the only real force and power and cause in the universe having efficiency of and in itself, *except* as created wills may be true and real causes within their prescribed and limited bounds. Such is the view of those who interpret God in terms of personality and immanence.

This view of God's relation to the created universe serves to distinguish the Biblical doctrine of Divine providence from the teachings of materialists and deists, who entirely eliminate the Divine hand from the ongoing of the world, and in its stead make a kind of “God” of the “Laws of Nature,” or of “Force,” and hence have no need for a Divine Preserver and Governor. That there is a legitimate sense in which the uniform laws of nature, according to which God governs the world, may be designated as “secondary causes” may be admitted, but in no sense do Christian theists admit that the laws of nature have efficiency in and of themselves apart from the immanent and ever-active God.

Biblical theism, in like manner, makes ample room for the presence of the supernatural and miraculous, rightly defined; but we must not be blind to a danger here, in that it is possible to make so much of the presence

of God in the supernatural and miraculous as to overlook entirely his equally important, vital, and necessary presence in the natural; for this would be to encourage a deistical conception of God's relation to the world by exaggerating his transcendence at the expense of his immanence. That is the true theistic doctrine of providence which, while not undervaluing the supernatural and miraculous, properly interpreted, yet steadfastly maintains that God is none the less present in, and necessary to, what is termed the "natural."

No thoughtful and discerning reader of the New Testament can fail to see that to Christ God's power, goodness, and love were manifested as truly in nature and its laws and processes as in those unusual and extraordinary occurrences that we designate as miraculous and supernatural. This thought has been well set forth by Dr. J. Y. Simpson, of Scotland, in a recent volume where he says:

No other religious teacher of mankind speaks so lovingly of Nature as Jesus. Whether he refers to her order ("Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"), her mystery ("The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth"), or her restfulness and freedom from care ("Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin")—he saw in all these varying aspects a revelation of the goodness of God. His teaching here is something far deeper than any mere "parable of Nature," for he saw right to the heart of actual things. Yet amidst many tender descriptive touches that show how accurate was his observation of Nature, there is never anything that might be called sentimental in his treatment of her, just because he was so directly related to, and so completely understood, Nature. Indeed, it is in a figure from Nature that he discloses the inwardness of the climactic act of his life—"Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." One might almost say that from his convinced belief in the universal immediate activity of the Father, and of this world as his world, there followed this interesting result that Jesus does not seem to have thought of things as natural and supernatural, or of a contrast

between the general providence of God and "special" providences. To his deep, penetrating gaze such distinctions simply did not exist.¹

5. THE DIVINE IMMANENCE

This idea of God's essential relation to the continuation of all things in existence is perhaps best expressed by the term "immanence." Creation emphasizes God's transcendence, while providence emphasizes his immanence. Pantheism affirms God's immanence, but denies his transcendence. Deism affirms his transcendence, but denies his immanence. Biblical theism teaches that God is both transcendent and immanent. By the term transcendence, when applied to God, is meant that the Divine Being is a person, separate and distinct from nature and above nature—"nature" being used here in its largest signification as including all created things. By the Divine immanence is meant that God is in nature as well as over nature, and that the continuance of nature is as directly and immediately dependent upon him as the origin of nature—indeed by some God's preservation of the created universe is defined as an act of "continuous creation."

Immanence means something more than omnipresence, which term, in itself alone, does not affirm any causal relation between God and the thing to which he is present, whereas the term immanence does affirm such causal relation. By asserting the divine immanence, therefore, as a mode of God's providential efficiency, we affirm that all created things are dependent upon him for continued existence, that the laws of nature have no efficiency apart from their Creator and Preserver, that God is to be sought and seen in all forms and phases of creaturely existence, in the natural as well as the supernatural and

¹"Landmarks in the Struggle between Science and Religion," p. 259.

miraculous, that he is not only omnipresent but always and everywhere active both in the natural and the spiritual world, and that without him neither the material atom, nor the living organism, nor the rational soul could have any being. He not only created all things, but "by him all things consist"—that is, by him all things are preserved in being.

"The divine plan," says Dr. Borden P. Bowne, "contains the reason why anything is as it is, and the Divine is the source of all finite existence. The finite has no ground of being in itself, but is absolutely and always dependent upon the Divine will and purpose. With the exception, therefore, of the free will, it is not to be thought of as offering in any way a barrier to the Divine working."

This conception of the Divine immanence has been well expressed by Ilion T. Jones in his volume titled "Is There a God?" where he says:

It is a mistake to expect to find God wholly apart from human activity. If there is a God, he must work *through* human activity. He is not outside the universe as an engineer is outside his engine. He is not controlling the machinery from the power house by shifting levers and pushing numerous buttons. He is actually at work *in* the very forces which constitute the machinery of the universe—life process, heat, light, electricity, chemistry, radium. Man, the free will of man, is one of the forces of the universe in which God is at work. As far as we can tell, man's will power is the only *free* force, but it is nevertheless one of the forces resident in the world through which God achieves his purposes. God's power is not manifested in breaking through from the outside into man's sphere. It isn't that "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," that God's sphere begins where man's ends. The spheres of God's and man's activities are not two mutually exclusive circles, but a circle within a circle—God's circle includes man's circle. God's purposes are achieved as man acts, his power is revealed through the free movements of man, his will is achieved through the force we call man's will.

The fact that the Christian conception of God and Divine providence pervades all our thinking and finds expression in some sense in every chapter in this volume, no matter what the immediate subject under discussion is, renders it unnecessary that we go into further analysis in the presentation of this conception here and now. Next in importance to the Fatherhood of God, in analyzing this conception, we must place the Divine immanence, by the clear definition of which, and emphasis upon which, modern theology has been greatly enriched. The difficulty with those who, in their thought of God, place the greater emphasis upon the Divine transcendence is to find where God is. Those who place the emphasis upon the Divine immanence find it not only difficult but impossible to find any place where God is not. With this thought in mind George Taggart wrote the following lines:

“Where is thy God, they asked of me,
As if it were their thought that He,
Like Mortal, should be found to be
In some one spot.

Ah, that their eyes thus sightless are!
Do they not see the world afar,
The mountain height, the sparkling star,
The lowly cot,

The babbling brook, the flowers fair,
The sun, the sea, the living air—
Ah, could they tell me anywhere
That God is not?”

CHAPTER FOUR

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN FREE WILL

The human will, while free within bounds, is strictly bounded in its freedom. Man fits into his place in this ordered universe, but he cannot do as he wills with it. The steersman does not control the sea, though he makes its currents carry him to the harbor. We are a part of a larger world than our own freedom. We have to bend ourselves to the conditions in which we find ourselves. As the stream carries the eddy in its bosom, so the Will of the Eternal moves to its appointed goal, carrying us and our freedom with it.—*E. Griffith-Jones, in "Providence, Divine and Human."*

To assert, as some philosophers do, that the power of God cannot act upon the human mind without infringing upon its freedom, betrays, we venture to affirm, a profound ignorance of the whole doctrine of free agency.—*Albert Taylor Bledsoe.*

My will is not my own
Till Thou hast made it thine;
If it would reach a monarch's throne,
It must its crown resign:
It only stands unbent
Amid the clashing strife
When on thy bosom it has leant
And found in thee its life.

—*George Matheson.*

IV

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN FREE WILL

THE problem of Divine providence has its highest significance, not in its bearing on the laws of physical nature, but in that phase of it which concerns God's dealings with moral free agents, those creatures who may, and often do, act contrary to his will. God governs men as a father governs his children, as a ruler governs his free subjects; not as a machinist works his machine, or as a hypnotist controls his mesmerized victims. A father in his family and a sovereign in his realm may each do as he pleases within certain limits, and God infinitely more: "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" He setteth up one and putteth down another. Nevertheless, even God acts within limits; he limited himself when he created moral free agents. As a mere matter of power God can predetermine man's volitions and necessitate his acts, but he can do so only by making of him a kind of rational machine, and destroying his true freedom. But Scripture, reason, and consciousness all unite in teaching man that he is morally free, that he is an agent, and not something merely acted on. God's providential government of men, therefore, is based on their freedom as rational and moral beings, and consists in such an administration and guidance by the Holy Spirit of the affairs of men as shall encourage free moral agents to virtue, and discourage them from sin. God's providence must needs work upon and with two kinds of wills—willing wills and opposing wills.

"A virtuous being," says Dr. Flint, "is one who chooses of his own accord to do what is right. The notion of a moral creature being governed and guided without the concurrence and approval of his own will is a contradiction. If God desired to have moral creatures in his universe, he could only have them by endowing them with free will, the power to accept or reject his own will. The determination to create moral beings was a determination to create those who should be the cause of their own actions, and who might set aside his own laws."¹

1. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AS RELATED TO WILLING WILLS

The inspired apostle declares that God works in believers "both to will and to do" of his good pleasure. If God's special providence over and in behalf of his children may involve an intervention of his Divine power within the realm of physical law without in any way nullifying those laws, much more, it would seem, will it involve a similar intervention within the realm of the human mind and human will—and this also without nullifying the freedom of the will. Spiritual guidance is one of the most precious privileges of believers, but it is difficult to conceive how the Holy Spirit can effectually guide a believer without finding some way of influencing his will and securing volitions that are at once free and at the same time in accordance with the Divine will. If men can influence their fellow men without destroying their freedom, surely, and even more, must we believe that God can find a way to influence and guide his obedient children without violating the laws of moral free agency with which he has endowed them. His "obedient children," we say—that is, those who have

¹"Theism," p. 255.

willing wills for him to act upon and through. The power that makes a free agent's will to become a willing will is in the free agent and not in God. Human life involves major and minor volitions—the former numerous, the latter innumerable. When the free agent, desiring to know and do the will of God, has made his will to be a willing will, in its relation to the Divine will, he has put forth the major volition that is the very essence of freedom; and then, and then only, can God guide and control his will without overriding and destroying the creature's free agency.

While most of man's thoughts, emotions, and volitions are self-determined in their origin, being due to the free and natural workings of his own mind and heart and will, yet there are also not only thoughts and emotions, but volitions, we have reason to believe, which are divinely produced. The former are his primary volitions and are the expression of his freedom; the latter are the volitions that result from God's working on and in and through a willing will. Even a sinner under conviction often has awakened within him thoughts and emotions that are produced by the Holy Ghost. Much more has the believer divinely produced thoughts and feelings; and, if divinely produced thoughts and feelings, there may be, in like manner, it would seem, divinely produced volitions, because, with a willing will, the Christian believer seeks Divine guidance, and this not once but continuously. Does this seem irreconcilable with the fact of moral free agency? We think it can be shown that such Divine guidance is not inconsistent with a Christian believer's perfect free agency.

No volition of the human will that is divinely originated and necessitated can be a free moral volition in a creature; for moral volitions are such as are put forth

freely, in view of motives and moral ends. The element of necessity and compulsion would destroy all true freedom in, and moral accountability for, any particular volition. No necessitated, compulsory volition could be either virtuous or vicious. But—and here is the crucial point which we must emphasize and repeat—when a man, by an act of his own will, freely commits the ordering of his life to God, and prays God to choose for him what is best, working in him both to will and to do, that act of self-commitment to God involves the very essence of moral freedom and is the highest exercise of free agency.

The oft-quoted words of the poet—"Our wills are ours to make them thine"—are as happy and profound a statement of philosophical and theological truth as they are the poetic expression of a great idea. In other words, the highest moral act of man's free will is the surrender of itself to the Divine will; and whatsoever control of man's will on God's part results from and follows this free act of self-surrender, this appeal for Divine guidance, is entirely consistent with perfect moral freedom, even though it should involve divinely produced volitions—decisions due to God's potent intervention in response to man's appeal. Does a perplexed child cease to be free when in the exercise of his freedom he asks a wise and loving father to decide a matter for him and be his guide in attaining a certain desired end? Surely not; and this intervention of parental wisdom and love is none the less effective if it should work, as far as possible—as it surely will, if wise—through the mind and will of the child, rather than allow the child to be entirely passive. So God works effectually through the mind and will of every soul who freely and unreservedly com-

mits himself to the Divine will, and does this not once simply, but continuously.

God cannot, under the existing laws of human freedom which he himself has appointed, work in and through the sinner "both to will and to do," because the sinner's will is bent on evil, and hence opposed to the Divine will. God's will can work not with, but only against, a sinful will; and if it should so work, and should necessitate his volitions, *that* would destroy his true freedom. But if God should work in and through the obedient and acquiescent will of one who is seeking divine guidance, *that* would be an exercise of divine power in no way incompatible with the true moral freedom of men. Such is the influence, as we conceive it, of the Divine upon the human will in providence. God's providence works freely and effectively only through willing wills.

But we should never lose sight of the fact that the determining cause why God's providence may and often does work different results in different individuals is not to be found in the arbitrary and discriminating favoritism of God, but in the individuals who are the agents and recipients of his providential offices. In spite of the prayer of faith that is genuine and true, God in his wise providence may suffer that to happen, or even himself bring that to pass which is quite different from the thing prayed for. God's providence embraces within its wide scope both the laws of nature and the prayers of his free moral creatures; but it represents a reign of wisdom as well as of power and love. The all-wise God alone is capable of deciding what is best for individuals and for the larger interests of his kingdom when it concerns matters of good and ill, of health and sickness, of life and death. We may not call on God's power and love to do that which his wisdom does not approve.

2. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AS RELATED TO SINFUL AND OPPOSING WILLS

But God's providence, we have said, encounters opposing as well as willing wills. Not every unconverted man, however, represents an equally antagonistic will—there are different degrees of opposition. That God's gracious and special providence in behalf of an individual often antedates his forsaking sin and his acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour is manifest to every student of Christian biography. Much of the best training that many a "chosen vessel" ever receives for his life work turns out to be that unconscious providential preparation which he was receiving under his Father's guidance before he consciously consecrated himself to his divine Master. "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me," said God to Cyrus; and on this text Horace Bushnell preached one of the greatest of modern sermons. Dr. Bushnell's greatest discourse is titled, "Every man's life a plan of God." If it be true of a Christian man that, even before his conversion, the Holy Spirit was seeking him, and even preparing him, as far as was then possible, for fulfilling the "plan of God" in his life, is it not in all probability equally true that the Holy Spirit and the good providence of God were working, although ineffectually, in behalf of and upon other sinners who persisted to the end in rebellion against God? Such is the power of moral free agency with which God has endowed man that the created free agent can defeat the plan of infinite Love concerning his life and frustrate the workings of providence in his behalf. This is brought out in a striking way in the eighteenth chapter of Jeremiah, where men and nations, even though described as being in the hands of God like clay in the hands of the potter, are recognized as free agents still, and the real

responsible and determining cause of their being marred in the hands of the Divine potter is located in their own sinful free wills.

It thus appears that whether a free moral agent shall allow God's providential plans to be wrought out in him and for him or not depends upon his own free will. It follows, therefore, that Divine providence is conditioned and limited by sinful free will.

For the existence in this world of moral free agents, creatures in a state of probation capable of sinning, God as sovereign Creator is wholly responsible; but for the existence in our world of moral evil, of sin, man, the moral free agent, is wholly responsible. Because a free agent can sin, it does not follow that he is bound to sin. In the act of sinning man is perfectly free. God could prevent moral free agents from sinning only by not creating them, or else by placing their wills under irresistible divine restraint and compulsion. But it is plain to see that the latter method of controlling them would inevitably destroy their real and true freedom; and if this were done, then not only all sin but all virtue and holiness as attributes of free beings would thereby be rendered impossible in men; for only such beings can put forth free holy volitions as can put forth free sinful volitions. In studying the problem of moral evil we must never overlook the fact that no human being is under the necessity of sinning; if he were, such act would cease to be sinful. And the sovereign God who is responsible for creating free agents is also under divine obligation—we say it reverently—to place the free agents whom he creates under conditions favorable to virtue; and if the providential conditions surrounding different men in life, conditions for which they themselves are in no way responsible, are different, being

better for some than for others, we may say reverently that the all-just and holy God is under divine obligation to conform his judgments as to culpability and guilt, as to good and ill desert, to these differing conditions. And such, indeed, are the facts in the case, for nothing is more obvious in the realm of free personality than differences in moral character for which, while men are themselves chiefly responsible, conditions are also in part responsible. They are judged by God and man in the light of their privileges and opportunities. Good and ill desert, rewards and punishments, in time and eternity, involve and require the application of this principle in the utmost righteousness.

Concerning God nothing is more certainly and definitely revealed than that "the Judge of all the earth will do right." This means that while it may be that God will give to some men, and perchance to all men, more of good than they may justly claim as their right, he will never, can never, send upon any man by way of punishment more of suffering than he deserves, more than is absolutely just and right. If we know anything at all about God, we know that he is absolutely just—so just in his judgments of and dealings with the sinful that no sinner can ever in his hands suffer aught in degree or duration more than he justly deserves. Men may and do differ pole-wide as to what fate may justly await those moral free agents who live a sinful life and die impenitent sinners. The one thing we know is that if there be a God, and a future life where men shall reap the fruit of their own sowing in this life, it is certain that in the hands of that all-just and holy God no soul, not even the worst, can possibly suffer one iota of misery more than he justly deserves. All God's providential dealings with free agents in this life of probation should be interpreted

in the light of this assurance which we have of his absolute justice. Far more certain are we of this than we are of the correctness of any credal statement as to the future lot of the wicked. Let every man, therefore, who believes in the existence of an all-just God and a future life prepare to meet such a God. This surely is altogether reasonable.

3. WHEREIN THE DIVINE WILL IS CONDITIONED ON AND LIMITED BY THE HUMAN WILL

It is said of the divine-human Christ that he could not do many mighty works in a certain city because of the unbelief of the people. This means that when God created moral free agents he placed limitations upon his own will within the realm of human free agency. Whatever is a contradiction in thought is an impossibility to Divine omnipotence, and for a creature to be absolutely free, possessing self-determining power of will, and at the same time have his volitions divinely determined and divinely produced, would involve a contradiction in thought. The exercise of self-determining power of will is the very essence of free agency. If God should make a man willing by compelling him to put forth a certain volition in harmony with his own will, a volition which the man would not have put forth of his own accord, in that case the man's will would best be described as acted upon rather than as itself acting. The dignity and nobility of man's nature as a rational and moral free agent carries necessarily along with it the possibility and peril of defying and defeating the will of his Creator. But it is also true that the greatness and glory of the Creator wait for their highest human manifestation upon the exercise of man's free agency, seeing that, next to the divine-human Christ, holy men reveal God most

adequately and perfectly of all created things. It is in the sphere of free will, then, the sphere where the Divine and the human will act and react upon each other, that we can best study the doctrine of Divine providence in its deepest significance.

Bishop E. D. Mouzon has written wise and true words on this subject, which strongly reënforce what we have said:

The doctrine of Divine providence does not mean that whatever is is best. It does not mean that whatever circumstances a man may find himself in are the best possible for that man. God has made us free agents, and through our own sins and the sins of others many things come upon us that God never intended—sorrows and afflictions from which God would have spared us, if only we had not stood in God's way. Many things happen that are not only not the best possible, but, one might almost say, the very worst possible. . . . It is conceivable that God might have made a world without sin and sorrow. Bright stars, mountains and valleys, oceans and rivers, flowers and birds—God might have made them all without any moral evil in the world. This is at least conceivable. But there are things fairer by far than these, and infinitely more precious—namely, things which have to do with moral character—self-control, patience, gentleness, pity, self-sacrifice, aspiration, faith, hope, love. And for these to exist at all, God had to make the world as it is. Unless sin and sorrow be possible, moral character is forever impossible. In a mechanical universe there can be no moral character; in a world of fixed fate there can never be any such thing as virtue. Men must be freely good if they are good at all; and men are bad only as they have freely broken away from goodness. Sorrow is the black shadow of sin; and if sin were not possible in this world, righteousness would be forever impossible. Only in a free world can moral character grow. Of one thing however we may be sure: When God assumed the responsibility of making such a world he knew that in the long run it was infinitely better to make it than not to make it, and that in the end he would be able to say, as he said at the beginning, It is good.¹

“The most fundamental law in the spiritual kingdom,” says Dr. B. M. Palmer, “is that the will of the creature must be drawn forth on the human plane just as articu-

¹“Does God Care?” p. 73.

lately as the will of the Creator on the Divine plane. These blend as the factors in the production of every event just as surely as the multiplier and the multiplied combine in the quotient. Destroy either of the two and history becomes a blank; it is no longer the record of human actions nor of a Divine government over the same. We may not be able to penetrate the mystery which enshrouds the union of the two, nor to measure the angle of intersection between these distinct planes of the human and Divine agency. But the great truth stands out, under the attestation of consciousness, that God governs man through his thought, conscience, and will. The Christian recognizes every thought and desire as his own and feels his responsibility in reference to each. Under a full conviction of his individual accountability, he 'works out his own salvation with fear and trembling,' knowing at the same time that 'it is God that worketh in him to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Nor is he conscious of the least jar arising from any collision between the two agencies, both of which are equally necessary in their respective spheres. Just here the office of prayer is found. It is ordained under a moral system that the creature's will may freely place itself upon the will of the Creator and avow its coalescence with the same. It enters as an integer into the final result, and the whole moral nature of man is thus recognized in the sphere of grace, as in that of law."¹

Our belief in Divine providence in no wise demands the abrogation and violation of the laws of either physical nature or human nature. So writes Professor Bousset, of Goettingen.² On the contrary, it is an es-

¹"The Theology of Prayer," p. 146.

²See his volume titled "The Faith of a Modern Protestant," from which the thoughts here presented are taken, but in condensed and somewhat altered form.

sential part of our faith in the self-revealed God who is ever near to us that he should himself keep within the ordinances which he has established for his creatures. We believe God to be a God of law and order, and not of mere caprice and arbitrary will. It is our privilege to discover and use these laws, but the Creator's knowledge and use of them is infinitely superior to ours. Humanly speaking, we may say that God knows a thousand ways and means within the limits of given laws and ordinances unknown to us and knows the many channels of approach to individuals, surrounding them with his goodness and care, uplifting them to the community of spirits whose spiritual link he himself is, and raising them toward himself. This divine influence, this intervention of the Divine Spirit within the realm of the free activities of the human spirit, may be a reality in the deepest sense, without resulting in setting aside the law or crushing the finite will of the individual. It is Divine power working within and through the law; it is the Divine will working upon and in the human will, but not destroying its freedom. The Divine will does not work with noise and uproar, destroying all opposition; but it is gently, noiselessly, softly, and wisely visible to the eye of faith only, that it operates in the affairs of the world.

When we want to form a picture or symbol of Divine activity, we may helpfully think of a great, dominating human personality, the influence of which almost approaches omnipotence. What is the secret of that influence? It is surely not to be found in the violent destruction of all obstacles, in the assertion and exercise of power. It is quite otherwise. We believe that this personality guides and controls from within, as it were; it does not compel from without. If the influence of

a great personality upon lesser personalities becomes so powerful as to appear in some instances all but irresistible, it is not because the will of the lesser personality is robbed of its individuality and freedom, but rather because the lesser personality, consciously, freely, and it may be joyfully, follows the stronger and wiser will. After this fashion does God, in accomplishing his providential plans and activities, influence and govern his free creatures.

4. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AS RELATED TO HUMAN COÖPERATION

We have said that the purposes and ends of Divine providence can be realized only when the Divine and human wills work in harmony. Life is a copartnership between God and man; and its success and blessedness depend upon their working together. The words of Christ concerning the Heavenly Father's watchful and loving providence do not mean that the children of God are not in any sense to take thought for food and raiment, and labor daily to obtain the necessities of life. Labor, both mental and physical, is as much a duty as prayer, and a duty incumbent upon the saintliest souls no less than upon sinners. The prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," does not render it unnecessary that they who offer it should work for their own daily bread. Prayer is not meant to be a substitute for manual labor, but to accompany it; nor is Divine providence meant to be a substitute for human activity and forethought, but is conditioned on human coöperation—and this for the moral good of men themselves, and not because God's omnipotence needs to be supplemented by man's weakness. Nothing could be more hurtful to healthful Christian activity than to interpret our Lord's insistence, in

the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere, upon trust in the Heavenly Father's watchful providence as a justification of thoughtlessness, idleness, and improvidence; seeing that its purpose is simply to warn us against that needless and hurtful anxiety about the future which is not only inconsistent with trust in God, but which is utterly destructive of man's best efforts in his own behalf. The declaration that God works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure is not given as a reason why we should do nothing for ourselves, but on the contrary as a reason why we should have confidence to go ahead and work out our own salvation, with the assurance that our labor shall not be in vain because it is "in the Lord." "Tie up your camel as best you can," said Mohammed to his followers, "and then trust it to providence."

In beginning his volume titled "The Great Partnership: Man and God," Dr. J. A. MacCallum says:

The Heavenly Father seeks to express himself through the achievements of those who share his life. The pressure of his Spirit is the dynamic that pushes them into action. Thus they are united with him in a joint enterprise that I have called "The Great Partnership." Man, however, can never meet his full responsibility unless and until he understands that he has infinite resources at his command. God is the senior partner who has furnished the capital, and he is always ready to have any of his fellow laborers use whatever of his wealth they can to further their mutual interests. Man lives in God and God in man. . . . None can tell where divinity leaves off and humanity begins. God is in nature, history, and society, as well as in ourselves. In love, beauty, joy, faith, law, wisdom, and goodness he presses into our lives, and, as we reveal these qualities in character, we prove our kinship to him and our capacity to act as his agents. This explains how and why it is that in serving man we are serving God and thereby realizing our highest potentialities.

"This we commanded you," writes Paul to his Thessalonian converts, "that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which

walk among you disorderly, working not at all." (2 Thess. 3: 10.) Some have taught that the highest ideal of Christian faith is to live by prayer and trust, and to look to Divine providence to supply our needs rather than to make appeals for gifts of charity. Dr. Müller claimed, and his followers have since claimed, that his famous orphanage in England has been kept in existence through all these years, not by self-support, nor yet by begging money of men, but by prayer to God and trust in his providence. To this one may reply and say that the orphanage has been able to live only because some other Christians have not led this so-called ideal "life of trust," but with diligence have worked for food and raiment so as to have enough for themselves and something to spare for the orphans. And as to making appeals for contributions to a worthy cause, there is, perhaps, no more effectual way to appeal to the Christian public in behalf of a worthy charity, such as a Christian orphanage, than to advertise the fact continually that they do not ask the public specifically for the things they need. Certain it is that God has not sent Mr. Müller's orphanage any food and clothing for its needy and worthy inmates except such as some other Christians had labored for and had to spare. If every Christian undertook to live by prayer and faith, believing it unnecessary to labor for his own support, the theory of the ideal Christian life being a "life of trust" would soon refute itself. Of course we do not mean to imply that Mr. Müller and his associates and successors have been idlers; but we do mean to say that Christian orphanages that support themselves largely by their own labors, or which are supported by endowments or by private and public appeals for money and collections from Christian people, are just as much entitled to feel that God's

blessing is upon them and his special providence exercised for them, as if they were supported according to Mr. Müller's plan—namely, by simply praying to God to send them what is needed.

We must both work ourselves and trust in God. This is the divine plan. We are encouraged to work because we know that God works in us and with us and through us. But God helps those who help themselves, and they alone who do the best they can to help themselves have the moral right to ask God to help them and the right to expect his help. The prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," does not render it unnecessary that we should work for our own daily bread. Faith must not become fanaticism. Divine providence is conditioned on human coöperation. To think of it as a substitute for human forethought and activity is not only to misinterpret its divine purpose, but to turn into a positive hindrance that which is an invaluable and indispensable help to every one who seeks to realize the divine ideal in his life. God's power enters into our work and supplements our weakness, as Stopford A. Brooke has said:

If the thing we have set going is in accord with the movement of the physical, or intellectual, or moral, or, in the case of religion in life, with the spiritual order of the universe, it grows, independently of our efforts, by its own vitality. We tend it, water it, prune it day by day, clear its way to the light, fix ourselves upon it, pour into it all our character, body, and spirit, and yet we are conscious that our power is not sufficient to bring it to its fullness. Suddenly, to our surprise and joy, the thing breaks into blossom, flowers and bears fruit, develops beyond our expectation, flings its seeds hither and thither, and, instead of one plant, there are twenty. What has happened? Why, the work, the thing we have created, being in harmony with the life of all things, has grown of itself; or, as I should put it, God, who is this universal life, finding the work we have made in accord with his, has entered into this work of ours, and now his power is our power, and his creative force in our creation.

CHAPTER FIVE

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AS RELATED TO
NATURAL AND MORAL EVIL

We need a larger God than our fathers because we live in an infinitely larger world; in fact, our world is but an infinitesimal fraction of a universe. Before we pass final judgment upon the meaning of the sorrows and disappointments of the human race, we must, as Kant saw clearly and stated forcefully, get a clear perspective of the end in view. If the happiness of the individual, his success in his enterprises, and his freedom from pain, is the supreme goal of life—if the universe is only a place of pleasure—then it must appear that, whatever its cause or origin, it is so colossal a failure that belief in divine control is impossible. But if we take the longest view, and look upon the universe as the training ground of the spirit, many of our perplexities will be relegated forthwith to a secondary place. They will be seen to represent temporary or provisional stages in a process whose complete justification will only become evident when its fruits mature in the form of virtuous souls. If the end for which the world was made is the culture of men of noble character, it is obvious that we have no reason to murmur or complain about the cost—*J. A. MacCallum, in "The Great Partnership."*

By far the larger proportion of the suffering that man endures at the hands of Nature is not due to Nature at all, but to man, being the result of his own neglect, improvidence, and carelessness. Nature exists for man, not man for Nature; but if she exists for him, it is to teach him to transcend her, to make him even more of a man, raising each succeeding generation above its predecessor. To do this she must awaken the energy and forethought that are in him, by compelling him to study that he may know, master, and direct her forces for the accomplishment of beneficent ends. And for this reason Nature, in order that she may be beneficent, must be uniform and inexorable in her laws.—*A. M. Fairbairn.*

V

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AS RELATED TO NATURAL AND MORAL EVIL

THE distinction between natural and moral evil is fundamental. Moral evil is something done by a rational and moral free agent; natural or physical evil is something suffered by a sentient being, which may or may not be a free agent. Man is a physico-spiritual being and is therefore subject to both kinds of evil. Moral evil may or may not be the cause of physical evil. The evil that a free agent does is sin. Sin is the conscious and deliberate violation by a rational being of the command of his Creator and Sovereign; it is the opposition and defiance of the will of the creature to the will of his Creator. As a problem of Divine providence it is something much more serious than the other kind of evil. Physical evil, however, the evil which men suffer, is that form of evil that gives mankind most concern, and which they find most difficult to reconcile with the providence of an all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful God. The foregoing chapter, containing a discussion of the relation of the Divine and the human will to each other, has defined sinful free will and the guilt involved in disobedience. But while natural or physical evil may be distinguished from moral evil, it cannot be separated from it; it has moral aspects that relate it fundamentally to the providence of the Creator and Ruler of the world.

1. PHYSICAL EVIL AND GOD

There are perhaps few students of philosophy and religion who are not familiar with John Stuart Mill's

famous bill of indictment against Nature which he charges with every crime known to man, which indictment Dr. Illingworth has described¹ as "one of the most emotional pieces of rhetoric of which a professed logician was ever guilty," and which recalls Tennyson's no less famous lines:

"Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love creation's final law—
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravin, shrieked against his creed."

Mill can prevent his indictment from being puerile and absurd only by spelling Nature with a capital N—thus not only personifying it, but deifying it and identifying it with the Divine Being. His indictment is in part as follows:

Killing, the most criminal act recognized by human laws, Nature does once to every man that lives; and in a large proportion of cases after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow creatures. If, by an arbitrary reservation, we refuse to account anything murder but what abridges a certain term supposed to be allotted to human life, Nature also does this to all but a small percentage of lives, and does it in all the modes, violent or insidious, in which the worst human beings take the lives of one another. Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. All this Nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and the noblest indifferently with the meanest and the worst; upon those who are engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises, and often as the direct consequence of the noblest acts; and it might also be imagined as a punishment for them.

Next to taking life (equal to it, according to a high authority) is taking the means by which we live; and Nature does this, too, on the largest scale and with the most callous indifference. A single hurricane

¹*Lux Mundi*, p. 133.

destroys the hopes of a season; a flight of locusts, or an inundation, desolates a district; a trifling chemical change in an edible root starves a million of people. The waves of the sea, like banditti, seize and appropriate the wealth of the rich and the little all of the poor with the same accompaniments of stripping, wounding, and killing as their human antitypes. Everything, in short, which the worst men commit either against life or property is perpetrated on a larger scale by natural agents.¹

Over against this indictment of Nature, or rather of the Creator of nature, by Mill, who greatly exaggerated the place and extent of pain and suffering in the world of animate nature, we may place the justification and vindication of the God of nature by two most distinguished men of science. Alfred Russell Wallace shares with Darwin whatever honor attaches to the suggestion and first development of the modern doctrine of evolution. He maintains that "animals have an almost perpetual enjoyment in their lives. Given the necessity of death and reproduction—and without them there could have been no progressive development of the animal world . . . it is difficult even to imagine a system by which a greater balance of happiness could have been secured." "The immense and rude powers of nature seem to convey to the imagination the impress of brute force and lawless violence; but it is not so," says Sir John Herschel. "There is mighty and rough work to be accomplished, and it cannot be done by gentle means. . . . Earthquakes and volcanoes are part and parcel of a great scheme of providential arrangement which is at work for good and not for ill. The volcano and the earthquake, dreadful as they are as local and temporary visitations, are in fact unavoidable (I had almost said necessary) incidents in a vast system of action to which we owe the very ground we stand upon, the very land we inhabit, without which

¹"Three Essays on Religion," pp. 21 and 30.

neither man nor beast nor bird would have a place for their existence, and the world would be the habitation of nothing but fishes."¹

"In proportion as we realize, through fuller understanding of the laws of their activity, that volcanoes are just as normal a part of terrestrial economy as glaciers, acting on the one hand as safety valves, and on the other restoring to the atmosphere part of the carbon dioxide which is constantly being locked up by sedimentary rocks and plant life, and without which life would soon cease, we shall no longer 'charge God with foolishness' or worse, but rather charge ourselves with folly, when misfortunes follow the building of cities near their slopes, or along seismic lines of fracture on the earth's surface."²

But even more forceful as an answer to the indictment of Mill are the following words of an eminent English theologian and philosopher:

No greater calamity could happen to men than the granting of supernatural aid whenever they had by negligence or ignorance, or any act of willfulness, involved themselves in straits. The very miracle that should be sought and wrought to stay Nature in a destructive course, or calm her in a tempestuous mood, would thus arrest the progress and the amelioration of mankind; for by teaching man to depend upon external and miraculous help, it would take from him the desire to improve his own lot, to trust his own intelligence, to obey the law of his own conscience and reason, and to amend by his own effort his life and the lives of others. There is nothing so fatal to the manhood of people as the charity that pauperizes. Were we so to relieve the improvident as to make him as well off as the provident, so to protect the thoughtless from his own thoughtlessness that he would suffer as little as the thoughtful, so to fill the squanderer's hand whenever he had emptied it that he would know nothing of want—would not the result be to set the highest possible premium on the shiftless and

¹"Familiar Lectures on Scientific Subjects," pp. 2, 3.

²J. Y. Simpson, "Landmarks in the Struggle between Science and Religion," pp. 255, 256.

retrogressive qualities of men? And so, in like manner, if supernatural power could be invoked by men generally to save them from the consequences of Nature's laws whenever their operations involved sufferings, in the very degree of the frequency and efficiency with which such supernatural power should be used in their behalf, would their manhood be injured. Nature must be uniform, self-consistent, and faithful to herself if she is to do her best for man—for, we repeat, Nature exists for man, not man for Nature—and in her very severity lies the education which is the last thing that man could afford to lose.¹

2. MORAL GOOD IN PHYSICAL EVIL

That the Biblical writers do not regard the existence of evil as a valid objection to or reflection upon Divine providence is evident to every student of the Scriptures. Indeed, it is in working good out of what the world accounts evil that Divine providence accomplishes many of its most salutary and beneficent ends in behalf of the righteous. That natural or physical evil (sickness, suffering, poverty, and the like) is one of the mightiest agencies in the hands of God for restraining and correcting moral evil and for working out moral good and securing spiritual blessings in a world like ours admits of easy and abundant demonstration.

If man had never sinned, there would probably never have been such a large providential use of natural or physical evil as has prevailed in God's dealings with men throughout the long history of our race. For much of the physical evil in the world man is directly and wholly responsible. It is the result of culpable ignorance and willful sin. An altogether virtuous and holy race of beings inhabiting our planet—if we may venture to conceive of or imagine such a race of free beings dwelling here—would not have needed the presence and discipline of natural evil to secure their highest moral and spiritual development. But a corrupt and sinning race

¹A. M. Fairbairn, "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," p. 140.

has needed and still needs, and will always need, such a disciplinary agency to restrain them from sin and to develop holy character.

It is not true now, certainly not always or even generally, that sin is the cause of an individual's suffering physical evil, nor that extraordinary suffering is a proof of extraordinary sin. "Master, who did sin," asked the disciples, "this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered: "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." That is to say, the physical suffering of human beings is designed in some large and true sense for their moral and spiritual good and for the Divine glory as revealed in working moral good out of physical evil. This may not be, and cannot be, the whole explanation as to why physical ills are permitted or sent by God to the children of men; but it is certain that our divine Lord meant to furnish, in this reply to the question of his disciples, an answer in part at least to the mystery of human suffering. Physical suffering in a world like ours is not only a powerful but a necessary agency for the correction and cure of moral evil and for the spiritual development of beings who but for the restraints and discipline of physical sufferings would live only in the flesh and seek not the things of the spirit. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The saintly and eminently useful men and women of history have, as a rule, had to undergo a severe discipline and to endure many and severe trials and were made perfect only by their sufferings. Most men owe quite as much to what they have suffered and had to

contend against and endure as they do to what has been altogether agreeable and pleasing to them. It is thus that Divine providence turns much of the world's natural and physical evil into moral good.

Few wiser words have ever been written on this subject by any author than by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn in his "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," from which work we have already made a liberal quotation, but the following utterances are too good to omit:

The evils accomplished by Nature alone are but few; those wrought by Nature and man in conjunction form a multitude which no man can number; while those caused by man's own ignorance or neglect of natural forces constitute an infinite, a never-ending series. The natural forces that now and then work so disastrously are among man's most beneficent educators. He has to study them that he may master them, and the more he studies their secret the greater the mastery he attains. It is marvelous what limits man has set to the destructive powers of Nature; and in setting these limits he has learned the most beneficent of all lessons—that he conquers by obedience and commands by obeying. We have all learned of Nature in total unconsciousness more than we have learned consciously from all other teachers combined. The sufferings which Nature inflicts on man have helped to educate him in humanity; she has, so to speak, by her very inhumanity, made him humane. The shipwreck calls for the lifeboat, and the hardy men who stand safe on shore can brave the terror of the storm in pity for those who are threatened by the devouring sea. The famine that sends gaunt death into the homes of one people touches another with pity, and helps to create among those who are alien in blood and speech the feeling of kinship, the gracious and kindly sense of brotherhood. The more men have penetrated into the secrets of Nature, the more have they learned their community of interests, and the more have they been moved by a feeling which has turned into the passion to fight disease for the common good, even though they might themselves enjoy immunity from it. The very sufferings which Nature has inflicted have disciplined man in mercy. Calamities evoke the sympathy that hastens to help, and the time will come when sympathy and science, if they do not entirely eliminate famine and pestilence and other sufferings inflicted by Nature, will at least greatly ameliorate man's lot by lessening the attendant ills and miseries, thus educing those higher humanities which had otherwise remained latent. (Page 137.)

3. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND THE SUFFERINGS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

This question has already been under consideration in studying the teachings of the book of Job concerning Divine providence and human suffering, but there are other things to be said.

Some Christians find comfort in believing that God himself determines by a special providence all the good and ill that befalls his children, their sickness or health, their poverty or wealth, their life or death—a most comfortable faith if the facts can be made to agree thereto, and made to do so not for one day or one year only, but for all the days and years of life. Others believe (and these are not few) that providence makes no discrimination between the saint and the sinner in all these matters, that the individual and the laws of nature determine all things that pertain to the purely temporal and material aspects of life, while God's providential interventions into life pertain only to the moral and spiritual aspects of life. Yet others vacillate between the one view and the other, believing now that God does send or withhold their material good and ill, and then again that he has nothing to do with these relations of life except through the laws of nature which he has ordained. These last are quite happy in the faith when all things temporal are according to their wishes, or even when they can account for and explain the providence that befalls them and their loved ones. But when things do not go to suit them and they cannot understand their ills, they, in heart at least, if not in spoken words, complain at their lot, and feel that this phase of life is wrapped in impenetrable mystery. And many good and wise men there are who fully and firmly believe in God, who suspend and reserve all their interpretations of providence, as it con-

cerns themselves, until after the events are over. Then, if it be plain that the suffering that came to them brought real moral and spiritual good, they interpret it as providential; if it failed to bring any discernible moral and spiritual good, they do not hold providence responsible for it.

It thus appears that the all-important thing for a child of God to have settled for him is not the question as to whether the ill that befalls him is specially sent upon him by God for his spiritual good, or is simply permitted to come to him in the course of nature; but it is important for him to be assured that, whether the one or the other be true, all things that befall him can be made to work together for his spiritual good, if he does his duty. And this assurance every one who truly loves God and faithfully serves him may have. Certain it is that to a child of God who always and everywhere does his duty nothing can happen which the heavenly Father cannot and will not overrule for his spiritual good and for the interests of his kingdom. But this means that a truly good man may providentially suffer poverty or pain, or invalidism ending in death; it may even mean that, like St. Stephen, one may suffer martyrdom at the hands of wicked men. He whose poverty is due to his own idleness or improvidence, or whose suffering is due to a culpable violation of the laws of health or whose approaching and inevitable death is seen plainly to be due to his own rashness or folly, should not seek for the explanation of his poverty or suffering or death in God, but in himself. To do otherwise would be to "charge God foolishly." Henry George has said truly:

Although it may take the language of prayer, it is blasphemy that attributes to the inscrutable decrees of Providence the suffering and brutishness that come of poverty; that turns with folded hands to the

All-Father and lays on him the responsibility for the want and crime of our great cities. We degrade the Everlasting; we slander the Just One. It is not the Almighty, but we ourselves who are responsible for the vice and misery that fester in our civilization. The Creator shows upon us his gifts, more than enough for all; but we, like swine scrambling for food, tread them in the mire, and turn, and tear, and rend each other.

This interpretation of the ills of life as related to Divine providence is doubtless very unsatisfying to the man whose primary concern is to find in providence a method and means of getting rid of his poverty or his bodily ills and in whom spiritual poverty and the sin-sickness of his soul cause but little thought and concern. But to the man who is seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, whose chief concern in the religious life is not concerning the things that pertain to the body and minister mainly to creature comfort, but concerning the things that shall make him a more spiritual and a more useful man, to such a one this conception of providence—this working of moral and spiritual good out of physical evil—is not disappointing; for, while it does not drive away the darkness, it reveals the light which God makes to shine in the darkness for souls that have spiritual vision.

4. THE PROVIDENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF LIFE

There is perhaps no phase of Divine providence that is more profitable to study than that of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator as seen in the limitations which he has imposed upon the nature of finite creatures, by virtue of which he has made the physical to set bounds to the intellectual, and how he has conditioned the ethical and spiritual development and happiness of men upon the physically and intellectually finite. Suppose, for instance, that sight and sound were not limited by

nature as they now are. Suppose that the natural and normal power of vision revealed to men immediately and directly all that is revealed to them by the microscope and telescope and X-ray. And suppose that by the natural and normal hearing of the ear men could catch all the sounds from far and near that are borne to them by the telephone and by wireless telegraphy. Would that be an advantage or a disadvantage to their highest and best development, and to their happiness and usefulness? We can but answer this hypothetical and speculative question by saying that unless such a change in man's capacities as that indicated had carried along with it a radical change in his constitution, or carried along with it power to adapt himself to the conditions supposed, it would detract from, rather than add to, his happiness and best moral and spiritual development. In the case and condition supposed men would see and hear so much that they would see and hear nothing—that is, the multitude of sights and sounds would be such that they could not concentrate their attention and thoughts on any one thing.

Does this seem to one who believes in man's ascent by evolution and his power of adaptation to physical environment as an altogether useless and unreasonable question to ask and answer? Then let us mention another and different aspect of man's life wherein the limitations of his nature seem to be an advantage and conducive to happiness. We refer now to those limitations of his knowledge which are a blessing. It is by thinking of one thing at a time that we think clearly and accurately and come to know things. We owe what of happiness and peace of mind we have in life quite as much to what we do not know and cannot know as to what we can and do know. What a blessed thing it is that God has not

endowed us with accurate and full foreknowledge of the future, and has made it possible for some things once known to be so thoroughly forgotten as to become practically if not absolutely unknown. Being such creatures as we are, we could not be happy unless God had hedged us in on all sides of our manifold physical and intellectual life with limitations, and these limitations so far condition our ethical and spiritual life that without them personality and character could not be developed. But these very limitations of life, imposed by the laws of nature upon us as finite beings at most only for a brief span of years, point to a life where these limitations can and will be so far lifted as to make possible unlimited growth in virtue, a life where we shall know even as we are known and be like Him whom we shall see, face to face, as he is. While awaiting the clearer light and larger knowledge of the future we can sing with John Fawcett:

"'Tis but in part we know thy will;
We bless thee for the sight:
Soon will thy love the rest reveal,
In glory's clearer light."

With rapture shall we then survey
Thy providence and grace;
And spend an everlasting day
In wonder, love, and praise."

Few students of Divine Providence, perhaps, have sufficiently recognized the wisdom of the Creator as manifested in the combination and blending, in our world and in our life, of the mutable and the immutable, of the contingent and the fixed, of the uncertain and variable along with the certain and uniform. While the fixed and uniform character of the laws of nature and of life, on the one hand, gives to providence and to human

life its needed element of firmness and certainty, on the other hand, the immense number and nice adaptation of these laws, like the innumerable rings of a coat-of-mail, give to it the needed flexibility whereby it can be made to fit the shape and posture of every individual man. No one perhaps has written more luminously on this subject than Dr. James McCosh:

We are now in circumstances to discover the advantages arising from the mixture of uniformity and uncertainty in the operations of nature. Both serve most important ends in the government of God. The one renders nature steady and stable, the other active and accommodating. Without the certainty man would waver as in a dream and wander as in a trackless desert; without the unexpected changes, he would make his rounds like the gin horse in its circuit, or the prisoner on his wheel. Were nature altogether capricious, man would likewise become altogether capricious, for he could have no motive to steadfast action. Again, were nature altogether fixed, it would make man's character as cold and formal as itself. The recurrences of nature surround us by friends and familiar faces, and we feel that we can walk with security and composure in the scenes in which our Maker has placed us. The occurrences of nature, on the other hand, bring us in contact with new objects and strangers, and quicken our energies by means of the feelings of curiosity and astonishment which are awakened.

The wisdom of God is seen alike in what he hath made fixed and in what he hath left free. The regularity, when it is observed by man, is the means of his attaining knowledge, scientific and practical; while the events which we call accidental enable God to turn the projects of mankind as he pleases toward the fulfillment of his own wise and mysterious ends. Without the uniformity man would be absolutely helpless; without the contingencies, he would become proud and disdainful. If the progressions of nature induce us to cherish trust and confidence, its digressions constrain us to entertain a sense of dependence. By the one class of arrangements man is made to feel security, and is prompted to that industry to which security gives scope; by the other he is constrained to feel that he needs the blessing of heaven, and is led to pour out his soul to God in humble supplications. In the one we see how all is arranged to suit our nature; and in the other we discover that we are as dependent on God as if nothing had been fixed or determined; and so the one invites to praise and the other to prayer. It is by the admirable union and blending of the two that man is encouraged to cherish a grateful confidence, and act upon it, while at the

same time he is obliged to entertain a feeling of dependence, and humble himself before a higher power.¹

5. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND WAR

Of all the ills that curse the human race, none combines all that is worst in both moral and physical evil more truly than does war between nations. Never before in the history of the world have so many Christians pondered the question as to the relation of God's providence to evil, physical and moral, as during and since the late World War. The moral shell shock of that war, brought about by its unprecedented and unmeasured horrors, was such as almost to unfit men for sanely and rightly considering the problem involved. Now that this war is ended, even though its awful ills abide, we may hope more safely and sanely to consider the relation of God's providence to this most disastrous and destructive of human evils. And in doing so we need to bear in mind that nations are but masses of free agents, grouped and organized into governments, and not impersonal and passive puppets in the hand of Divine omnipotence. God's providential government of nations, therefore, is subject to all the conditions and limitations involved in his government of individuals as free and responsible moral beings possessed of self-determining power.

Does some one interpose and say that in the crucible of war Christian civilization itself has been tried and found wanting—that the late World War and other wars in which Christian nations were arrayed against Christian nations prove that Christianity is a failure? If so, he has drawn a conclusion unwarranted by the premises.

We have already, in pointing out the relation of Divine

¹"Method of Divine Government," pp. 174, 175.

providence to moral and social evils generally, shown how, not God, but men and nations who are free moral agents are responsible for them; that nations are not impersonal, passive puppets controlled by Divine omnipotence. But, in answer to this charge that the late war proves the weakness and the failure of Christianity as a civilizing power, we affirm that the Christianity of Christ has not yet been truly and fully tried, that professing to be a Christian does not make either an individual or a nation really Christian. The wars of history have come not because of the Christianity of the nations involved, but because of an utter lack of Christianity on the part of those who were responsible for initiating them. Nothing, perhaps, that has ever occurred in the history of the world is so convincing of the absolute need of Christianity as the only adequate remedy for the ills of the world as this unchristian World War under the blight and shadow of which the world will long have to live. Let the Christianity of Christ be truly and fully tried by individuals and by nations—by all the nations—and there will be no wars. And this we say even though it be true that almost every notable providential epoch in history has been marred by war, and that it is in overruling the evil accompaniments and results of war that God's providence is often most manifest.

The Old Testament is, to no small extent, a history of wars that were waged in those ancient times, many of them wars of awful cruelty and suffering. The ancient narrative represents God as ordering and directing many of these wars. How can these facts be reconciled with the position we are here assuming, that the providence of God and the spirit of Christianity are thoroughly opposed to war? While war, it may be answered, is an

evil, yet, as long as certain moral conditions continue in the world, it is an evil that will continue. It is an agency to be used by an innocent and righteous nation only when no moral power will avail to accomplish the ends of reason and righteousness. So long as there are peoples and nations who are dominated by the powers and passions of darkness, who are not open to reason, who are so brutish in nature that only brute force will make them pause in their career of aggressive wickedness, just so long will it be found necessary to use physical force to resist the aggressions and unrighteous demands of such peoples. When it is found to be but casting pearls before swine to attempt to restrain them from aggression and violence by an appeal to reason and righteousness, war, it would seem, will be a necessary evil.

Nevertheless, Christianity, in the providence of God, is ever working upon people of this type to make them open to reason; and its power to elevate the lowest of the heathen, even the fetish worshiper and the cannibal, has been tried a thousand times and has been proved to be effective as often as it has been wisely tried. Full as the Old Testament history is of war, it is yet evident that war was recognized by all inspired writers as an evil that would be brought to an end in the golden age that was to come. The time was coming, said the prophets, when men should learn war no more; when they would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation would not lift up sword against nation any more. This result was to be accomplished by the coming Messiah. He was to be the Prince of Peace. He was to break the bow and sword in pieces, and cut the spear in sunder, and burn the chariot in the fire, and make wars to cease unto the ends

of the earth. Of the increase of his government and peace there should be no end. It was amid the horrors of war that these prophetic announcements of the coming Prince of Peace were made. After these predictions it was quite fitting that his advent should be heralded with the words: "Peace on earth, good will to men!" The peace which he was to establish on earth was to be secured by promoting good will among men; and peace, permanent peace, will never be brought about in any other way.

It is certainly a moral anomaly to see two nations at war with each other both of whom claim to be "Christian" and both of whom are praying to the same God to give them victory. Whenever this occurs, we may be sure either that one or the other of them is not really and truly Christian or that both of them are unchristian. A modern nation that claims to be "civilized" and "Christian" but yet is found precipitating and prosecuting a war of greed and aggression, stands in just as much need of being truly and thoroughly Christianized as do cannibals and fetish worshippers.

How much has God to do with deciding the issues of modern wars? Does it depend upon which of the two contending armies can succeed in "capturing" God? Napoleon said that God is always on the side that has the best-equipped and most powerful army. If it is true that nothing is ever settled until it is settled right, we may say that war in itself alone never settles anything, except the question as to which of the contending armies is at that time the mightier of the two. Questions of right can never rely on might for final settlement. Unless right is on the side that triumphs, the moral issues involved are certain to come up again for settlement. If war does finally settle any issue that is fought out be-

tween two nations, it is not because the triumphant nation had the mightiest army, but because it had right on its side. God is with those who have right on their side; but God's side does not always triumph in battle. Truth may be crushed to earth, but not to death; if crushed to earth, it will rise again. It is fortunate for the best interests of the world if might is on the side that is right. Many there are who believe that in the American Civil War, which involved the question of the abolition or continuance of slavery, right and might were on the same side, and therefore the issue may be considered as finally settled. Abraham Lincoln once said when fighting for the preservation of the Union and the abolition of human slavery: "I am not so much concerned to know that we have God on our side as I am to know that we are on God's side." Multitudes believe that God and right were on the side that triumphed in the Spanish-American war just as truly as he was on the side of his chosen people in some of the wars described in the Bible. If the battles of Santiago and Manila Bay had been described in the Old Testament as a part of the history of Israel, described just as they actually occurred, they would likely be accounted now among the great miracles of the sacred narrative. But let us guard against claiming that the might that triumphs in battle is therefore divinely vindicated as being right. Right has the eternal years of God in which to win its victories, and it will win them; if not to-day, some other day. That is all that we can be sure of; but every one who believes in the ruling and overruling providence of God can be sure of that.

6. EVIL PROVIDENTIALLY OVERRULED FOR GOOD

Not all evil is or can be overruled for good even by an omnipotent God, but some evil can be and is so over-

ruled. Surely there is a satisfactory answer to those who say that "the wrongs of society, the sufferings and sorrows of innocent and good men, the confusion and strife which are daily witnessed in all parts of the world, force us to the conclusion that there is either no God, or, if there be a God, he is devoid of all pity for human frailty and ignorance and has turned the world and all that inhabit it over to the sway of inexorable laws which work out their results without any reference to individual needs or communal and racial wants."¹

Among the things that befall the children of God some are directly due to the sins of other men. That good men, even the very best of men, suffer many things at the hands of wicked men admits of no question; and yet these ills, it would seem, are not to be excluded from the "all things" which are declared by the apostle to work together for good to them that love God. The good that may ensue to good men from the evil conduct of the wicked is certainly not due to the intrinsic power in sin to work good to those against whom it is maliciously directed; it can only be due to the fact that God overrules it for the good of the innocent. "As for you," said Joseph, "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." "The things which happened unto me," said Paul, "have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." God, though foreknowing the evil that wicked men are planning to work against his children, does not prevent it; though he does often in ways that we can see overrule it for good, and perhaps in more ways than we can see he does this. But suppose a good man is not simply wronged but killed by a wicked man? And what of the martyrs that died at the stake? We answer, the principle still holds good, even though

¹See Telford's "Man's Partnership in Divine Providence," p. 9.

we may not be able to explain how it works in many concrete cases. Does not the good man who dies in the discharge of duty and because of his fidelity to duty serve truly and nobly the cause of righteousness? Of course, if a happy immortality awaits anyone at death, it awaits him. The rare privilege of serving to advance the kingdom of God by death as well as by life belongs to every righteous man who suffers innocently and vicariously. God's kingdom is advanced in manifold ways by the death of good men who die in the faithful discharge of duty. Has it not become a proverb that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"?

But we need here again to remind ourselves that it is not material and temporal, but moral and spiritual good, that God has guaranteed to his holy, loving, and faithful children. The truly Christian man, however, is he who dares to believe in God and to be faithful even though he suffers wrong and his wrongs go unrequited. Herein is the glory of his faith and fidelity. That some sin can be and is overruled for good is, as we have said, not because there is any good in sin, for it is only evil continually. If sin had any intrinsic power to work good, they would be right who maintain that "the end justifies the means, and one may do evil when good will come of it"; and they also would be right who maintain that God is the author of evil, seeing that evil is, on that supposition, only disguised good—propositions which are thoroughly vicious and subversive of all that is good in man or God. The Scriptures, rightly interpreted, nowhere lend themselves to such false and misleading ethics.

While moral evil, sin, is spoken of in the Scriptures only to be forbidden and condemned, nevertheless, when repented of, forsaken, and pardoned, it may, by the grace of God, be followed, amid many evil consequences, by

some effects that are good—as, for example, by self-abasement and humility, by a burning zeal to undo, as far as possible, the evil done, and by special adaptation for working among and influencing those who are in bondage to the same forms of sin as those from which the individual has been graciously rescued. Augustine and John Newton were in early life among the most depraved and sinful men of whom we have any record; yet they became, by the grace of God, very saints for piety and usefulness. Only an extraordinary Christian, who had been an extraordinary sinner, was capable of writing that well-known hymn, much cherished and much sung a generation ago, beginning,

“Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!”

Only one saved from an awful sin was capable of writing that plaintive wail that has become the prayer of every devoutly penitent soul, the fifty-first Psalm. Only a man saved from the awful thralldom of intemperance could have such power with drunkards as John B. Gough had. Only a converted infidel like John Bailey could have such sympathy for honest doubters, or such power to drive out from their “refuge of lies” those whose professed skepticism was insincere. Nevertheless, let us beware of concluding from these and like examples that it is the will of God that his chosen vessels should go first to the school of Satan and learn his ways in order the more effectually to preach the gospel. Nothing can be more sure morally than that it is the will of God that men should be innocent and pure and holy from their youth up, and we may lay it down as one of the eternal axioms of divine truth that one who has been holy from youth up, other things being equal, has more moral power to do sure and large and lasting good than

another, half of whose life has been spent in the service of sin and Satan. It is only when and after a sinner has come under the dominion of the almighty grace of God that it is possible for any good, even the remotest and least, to come out of his past experience in sin.

7. NEVERTHELESS THE FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH SURE

It was in the midst of evils manifold, both physical and moral, with professing Christians making shipwreck of their own faith and overthrowing the faith of others, and yet more perilous times ahead, that St. Paul wrote to Timothy those memorable and triumphant words of faith and optimism which we must quote more than once: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." There are "perilous times" and perplexed believers in our day no less than in the days of Paul and Timothy, and we must have regard to them in our study of this difficult phase of Divine providence. It is not the presence of suffering in human life as a common and universal fact that troubles believers, but it is in trying to reconcile this and that concrete case of unmerited suffering on the part of innocent, virtuous, and dutiful men with the omnipotence and goodness of God, that the believer finds himself mystified in his faith and dumfounded and speechless in words. Unfortunately it is when men are at their worst physically, intellectually, and spiritually that they are most apt to give serious and painful consideration to this perplexing aspect of faith, whereas it is a subject which they should consider and seek to solve only when they are entirely normal and at their best in all these respects.

There come, even to the best of men, "black Fridays" and "blue Mondays" and other days when the wind,

blowing from the east, is laden with porcupine quills that stick into the sensitive nerves of the spirit as well as of the body—days when atmospheric and temperamental conditions are abnormal and depressing and conducive to doubt as to the existence of a beneficent and overruling providence. There were days when Bunyan's "Christian" found himself locked up in the dismal dungeon of Doubting Castle, and could not find the key of faith with which to unlock it. There were days when neither Milton nor Shakespeare could compose a line of poetry. There come days when the imagination which should be the creator and inspirer of high and lofty ideals seems to give itself over to the creation of grotesque and vain fantasies, and even to mean suspicions of the motives and the doings of others—to indulgence in morbid feelings that reflect not reality, but the unhealthy psychological condition of the person indulging in such thoughts and feelings. Not on days like these does one want to write his creed concerning Divine providence and the efficacy of prayer. One's faith is truest when the body, the mind, and the soul are all at their best. It was not on a "black Friday" or a "blue Monday," or with the wind blowing from the east, that Browning wrote—and wrote not for himself only, but for all of us:

"The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world."

In this world of ours where men labor and are heavy laden, clinging to the fringes of existence, mocked by disease and death, it is not strange that they connect the ills

that beset their lot with their Creator as well as with themselves; for, while they are responsible free agents living under the laws of nature, the resources of their strength come from the Divine Being without whose immanence they could not exist. Human life is best understood when interpreted as involving two interacting forces, the human and the divine, and these may work either harmoniously or in opposition, the free choices of the human making necessary now one and now another type of divine activity. The highest revelation of God is that of his Fatherhood as exhibited by Christ in the parable of the prodigal son, and as more fully and perfectly exhibited by Christ himself in his sufferings on the cross, in both of which God is represented as himself deeply touched with and profoundly sharing in the suffering wherewith we suffer. A God without feeling could not be *our* God; and, if God feels, and yet does not feel pain for the sufferings of his children, he could not be such a God as Christ has revealed. This Divine participation in suffering does not degrade, but glorifies God.

We can but feel, therefore, that the all-wise, all-good, all-powerful God, in making a world subject to moral and physical evil, chose, all things considered, the best possible kind of world for us. This being true, God, being perfect, was under the moral obligation, indeed, under the moral necessity, of choosing that which was best for creatures who could be made perfect only by suffering. It was when Robert Browning came at length to look at life thus sane and whole, large and long, that he sang:

"Let one more attest:
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime,
And all was for the best."

CHAPTER SIX
SPECIAL PROVIDENCE

It sometimes happens that for very friendship one denies his friend's petition, knowing it to be hurtful to him, or the contrary to be better for him, as a physician may refuse what his patient asks for. No wonder then if God, who fulfills the desire offered to him by his rational creature for the love he bears him, fails sometimes to fulfill the petition of those whom he singularly loves that he may fulfill it otherwise with some greater good.—*Thomas Aquinas.*

Many persons claim to have a direct experience of God. Arguments lead to the base of the mountain; experience alone scales it. He who has climbed the peak gets an evidence, and a thrill, of summit-vision which the dwellers in the valleys can never have. . . . The mystic has been there, and he comes to tell us that beyond all conjectures and inferences about the reality of God is the consciousness of experiencing and enjoying his presence.—*Rufus M. Jones.*

O thou good and omnipotent Being, thou carest for every one of us as if each individual were thine only care, and so thou carest for all as if they were but one.—*Prayer of St. Augustine.*

VI

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE

IN our studies and discussions so far we have recognized as legitimate and true the distinction commonly made by theologians between general and special providence. There is not a little confusion, however, in the minds of many Christian believers as to this distinction, and especially as to what constitutes the distinguishing marks of providences that are designated as "special." We have now reached a point where we must give a more accurate and complete definition of special providence, as to what it is and what it is not, than we have hitherto given.

While Dr. Dorner uses a somewhat different nomenclature from that which we employ, he makes virtually the same distinction which we make between God's providence as related to all men, good and bad alike, and providence as applicable only to believers, which latter he designates as "most special." "Theology," he says truly, "distinguishes *Providentia universalis*, embracing also nature, from *specialis*, referring to the kingdom of rational beings, and *specialissima*, referring only to believers."¹

1. SPECIAL PROVIDENCE DEFINED

By the doctrine of special providence, according to the best use of that term in theological literature, is meant, as already indicated, that minute care and ever-watchful supervision which God exercises over his obedient and believing children in things both small and great, which are designed to secure their ever-increasing holiness and

¹"System of Christian Doctrine," Vol. 2, p. 62.

usefulness. God's general providence is and must be special, in the sense that it descends to particulars, to the minute details of creaturely existence, and is always and everywhere active. But the Scriptures teach that there is a more special care over and ordering of the lives of the spiritually good than pertains to the wicked who have not the fear of God before their eyes, and it is this special Divine providence over God's faithful and elect children which we wish now to consider. The following Scriptures, some of which have already been quoted or referred to in the preceding discussion, set forth in unmistakable terms the doctrine of a special providence exercised by the Heavenly Father over and in behalf of the righteous, those who are ever seeking both to know and to do his will, and who are wise to see that obedience to the will of God finds its truest and best expression in loving and self-sacrificing service for one's fellow men.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way." "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." "There shall no evil happen to the just." These quotations are taken from the Old Testament; the doctrine is yet more specifically and beautifully stated by our Lord: "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 30-33.) "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the hairs of your heads are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Matt. 10: 29-31.) St. Paul's doctrine of special providence may be summed up in these

words: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8: 28.)

The following points seem to be plainly involved in any statement of the doctrine of special providence that can claim to be faithful to the teachings of the Scriptures and to the best types of Christian experience.

2. SPIRITUAL, NOT TEMPORAL, GOOD THE GREAT PURPOSE IN SPECIAL PROVIDENCE

A mistaken and hurtful notion has long been prevalent to the effect that special providence is designed to secure the secular and earthly good, the material and temporal prosperity of God's children. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Material blessings may, indeed, come as a special providence to the child of God, but that "good" which all things work together to secure for them that love God is mainly spiritual good and not financial or social or intellectual or temporal good, except as these may secure ultimate spiritual good, or result from ethical and spiritual good, as in truth they often do. Indeed, God's special providence may take away wealth and bring poverty in its stead in order to impart "true riches." It may defeat rather than further one's worldly hopes and ambitions; may be made manifest in sickness not less than in health, and even result in death instead of life. Sometimes a Christian can do more good by sickness or death than by health or continued life, and when that is the case, his sickness or death may well be interpreted as a special providence, by himself as well as by others, though others alone may live to see how his death promoted the cause of righteousness. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Many of the Old Testament promises do, it is true, seem to have special

reference to material and temporal blessings, but we should remember that the best interpretation of these is to be found in the New Testament, and there they are (as, for example, when quoted by Christ in the Temptation) interpreted as having mainly a spiritual significance.

When our Lord speaks of the very hairs of our heads being numbered, and declares that, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without the Father's notice, surely we, who are of more value than many sparrows, cannot drift beyond his love and care; when he speaks thus, his words might be interpreted as teaching that God will save us from physical suffering and death. But such is not his meaning, for the sparrow to which he refers is one that falls to the ground in death. In the very same context our Lord speaks of how they who have this pledge of love and care shall be persecuted and hated for his name's sake, and how some of them shall be put to death. And yet his promise is true. God is with these his children in their physical sufferings, but the great blessing wherewith he blesses them is not physical, but moral and spiritual. We affirm, therefore, that the great purpose of God's special providence over and in behalf of his children is not to secure their temporal prosperity or physical blessings, but their spiritual good, their ever-increasing holiness and usefulness, and their fitness for heaven.

This spiritual view of special providence, it must be granted, destroys much of its value to many so-called Christians; for material and temporal good is exactly what they want Divine providence to bring them. But the truly spiritual man wants everything in his life, its proportion of good and ill, so ordered as to make him a better and more useful man. There is no moral service

greater or higher than that of serving God and the cause of righteousness by suffering and dying when this is the only way, or the most effective way, of bringing about a good and great result of far-reaching beneficence and blessing to one's fellows. For God's special and gracious providence to accompany one's suffering and sickness and death does not mean that natural laws and agencies are not also at work; they are just as truly and fully at work as in any cases of sickness and suffering. God does not take his children from under the operation of nature's laws when they work hardships and physical ills. The blessing wherewith he blesses his children is—and we cannot say this too often or emphasize it too strongly—to be looked for and found in the realm of moral and spiritual good.

Few things are more hurtful to Christian faith and life, and more degrading to the Christian doctrine of special providence, than to associate it mainly with, and largely confine it to, material and temporal blessings. There is nothing connected with this precious doctrine of the Christian faith which it is so important to recognize and to emphasize as the fact that the one thing that God is working for, above everything else, in those whom he loves, is their freedom from sin, their holiness of heart and life, their beauty of character, and their largest usefulness. These are the things which constitute the true riches of the soul. And what God seeks for us, it behooves us also to seek most diligently for ourselves. This means that in our prayers our special concern should be for the things which God counts uppermost in life.

"This truth, that God is a *moral* Governor, placed in the foreground," says Dr. A. B. Bruce, "will help us to grasp firmly an ethical conception of providence as concerned supremely, not for the happiness of sentient

creatures, but for the reign of righteousness." Not sentient and physical pleasure and happiness in the creature, then, but blessedness, which is the higher, more spiritual, and more enduring happiness of rational and ethical beings, is thus the divine object and end of all the providential government and guidance which God exercises over men.

The same moral and spiritual end that is manifest in God's guidance of individual lives must also be the dominant motive and purpose of his government of nations great and small, which is ever directed toward making "the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Material prosperity is not to be taken as the proof and the measure of providential blessings either to an individual or to a nation. The evidence of God's providence working in and through nations is to be sought not in their commercial, or military, or political greatness, but in their righteousness and moral greatness, and in the moral service they render to other nations and to all mankind. But, in interpreting providence as it concerns men and nations, we must never lose sight of the fact that God has seen fit to condition the use of his power on the free agent's use of his free will. We should not hold God responsible for things when and where the reason and explanation of their being what they are should be sought and located in the free moral agency of men. And this is true, no matter whether they act individually as men or collectively as nations.

3. SPECIAL PROVIDENCE AND "ACCIDENTS"

Another still more mistaken and hurtful notion concerning special providence is the association of it with, and the limitation of it largely to, what are called

"accidents," those irregular and occasional occurrences which involve more than ordinary danger and risk to life. The popular notion of special providence associates it with a happy escape from visible dangers and serious injury, as when the house catches on fire, or the horses run away, or the automobiles collide, or the train is wrecked, or the ship encounters an awful storm, or one comes in contact with the contagious disease or the terrible pestilence that walketh in darkness. A happy escape from injury and death on such an occasion is popularly designated as a "special providence," and this regardless of whether the individual thus escaping is a saint or a sinner, a believer in God or an agnostic or an atheist. A person was once telling, in the presence of Archbishop Whately, of the most remarkable case of special providence he had ever known; a friend of his had escaped, uninjured, from a burning vessel at sea, when all others on board had either been burned or drowned. "Why," said the Archbishop, "I know of a more remarkable case than that; a friend of mine crossed the ocean, and not only he, but all on board, escaped; indeed, so special and minute was the providence of God that he did not even permit the ship to catch on fire at all!"

In a very true sense we may affirm that that providence is most special and particular which is so general and continuous that it is regular, minute, ceaseless, and all-embracing in its concern, care, and oversight. Let us illustrate the difference between a true and a false view of special providence by comparing and contrasting two types of motherhood that are more or less familiar to us all. The one exercises no special care over her child, leaving him to himself except when an accident occurs and he cuts his hand or breaks a limb or is badly

burned, or is taken down with some disease, and then she rushes to him and covers him with kisses and crowds upon him with multitudinous attentions. The other mother is always thinking of her child and watching over him, whether he is aware of it or not, with ceaseless care day and night. She sits by the window when he is at play in the yard, and from behind the curtain she watches his every movement; she looks after the food he eats, that it may be healthful; many times at night she creeps to his bed and tucks the cover around and under him, that he may be kept warm while he sleeps, thus by her ceaseless attentions trying to keep him safe from disease and injury, though her loving ministrations are present and abundant if disease and injury do come. The former mother represents the popular but erroneous view, the latter the true view of that Divine providence which is at once special and ceaseless. We cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that God's special providence is not a capricious, occasional, and irregular intervention of his love and power in behalf of his children, but involves ceaseless—yea, infinite—thought and care for those that love and obey him and are faithful to all the duties of life.

4. GENERAL AND SPECIAL PROVIDENCE BOTH EQUALLY DIVINE

It thus appears that general providence is in a true sense special and minute, and that special providence is, in a sense equally true, general and universal. Are we, then, to destroy the distinction that we have made between these two? We think not.

While the Scriptures appear to us to make a real and true distinction between God's natural and his supernatural order, between his general and his special provi-

dence, yet they so shade off into each other and so blend that to truly pious and wisely discerning souls both are alike and equally divine, the natural as well as the supernatural, general as well as special providence. So far as God's faithful and loving children are concerned, the general and the special do really blend into one. The only real and important distinction between the two is that made, not by the will of God, but by the free wills of men, by virtue of which some are in loving accord with the divine plans concerning them and others are at enmity with God and oppose the purpose of his love concerning them. If all men were, and had always been, alike trustful and loving children of the Heavenly Father, there would perhaps never have been any occasion for making a distinction between the general and the special providence of God. The only distinction which in that case we should have needed to recognize would have been as to the varieties of Divine providence, in view of the fact that the all-loving Father would for wise reasons cause widely different events to happen to his different children.

If any one, therefore, is inclined to deny the distinction which we have here made between general and special providence and prefers to affirm that there is but one general providential order over mankind in the world, his position cannot be seriously objected to, provided he does not thereby mean to teach that the world is governed by impersonal and immutable laws, but will affirm with clearness and confidence that the world is governed by the all-loving, all-wise, immanent, and everywhere active God. For, indeed, the only thing that is really "special" and out of order is the limitation which sin imposes upon the workings of Divine providence in so far as the self-will and opposition of men prevent the

realization of the providential purposes of God concerning them. But, unfortunately, sin is now, and has long been, so prevalent and dominant in the world that we have come to regard God's providence, as affected and limited by it, as that which is regular and general, and his more perfect and complete providence in behalf of and over the good as the irregular and special. But whether we call Divine providence, as related to believers, "general" or "special" is of little consequence, provided we believe that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord," that "all things work together for (spiritual) good to them that love God," and that to those who, duly subordinating the temporal to the spiritual, seek "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," all things needful "shall be added" by the Heavenly Father.

We cannot, perhaps, better serve the reader than to conclude the discussion of this phase of our general subject with the following pertinent quotations, which strongly reënforce in all essential points the definition which we have given of Divine providence and the distinction which we have made between general and special providence.

In his "Realities of Christian Theology" Dr. C. A. Beckwith says:

The distinction of general and special providence, as commonly presented, relates general providence to God's supervision over all events, and special providence to his care over each person in relation to all. Or special providence may designate that activity of God by which he strengthens for the overcoming of temptation, leads out of perplexity, or comforts in sorrow. For practical religious purposes such a distinction may be helpful. Two dangers, however, lurk in it. First it is beset by an undue subjectivism: one makes his own feelings the test of the divine action. The other danger is a fallacy which arises in part from the feeling that God cares more for the things which seem to us great in comparison with minor things in which we are less in-

terested, in part from an unreasoned notion that the two are in their very nature different, and in part from applying a standard of measurement which does injustice to the reality of things. Its correction lies in that view of the world which regards it not as a mechanical collocation of elements, but as an organic unity of related parts, and in conceiving God's relation to the world as personal.

If all the activities of the world have a personal source, then every single one expresses thought and rational will, purpose, and love. Every one has reference to ends which are present to the Divine mind. From this point of view it cannot be said that in experience one event more truly than another is an expression of the will of God. The whole of life and not simply a portion of it; death no less than life; joy and also sorrow; the noble plan which failed as well as the noble plan which succeeded—all are in the hand of God, and all are equally embraced in the care of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps, who not only keeps the soul, but also one's going out and one's coming in, from this time forth and forevermore.

"I have for myself," says Dr. Lyman Abbott, "practically abandoned the distinction between general providences and special providences. A special providence is, in this new conception of God's relation to the universe, nothing but a general providence specially perceived. It is a clearer perception of the universal presence. God is in all the phenomena; sometimes we wake up and see him; then we say: 'Behold, a special providence!' It is we who have opened our eyes. This is what I think Christ means when he says: 'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father.' This is what he means when he bids us pray day by day for our daily bread. The children at the table do not realize that the bread and milk which they have regularly for supper is the father's gift as well as the box of candy which he brings home on birthdays; but the one is as much the father's providence as the other, only the children specialize the one and recognize it. That is all."

All providence, thus interpreted, is equally divine, whether we call it general or special.

5. SPECIAL PROVIDENCE AS RELATED TO FAITH, PIETY,
AND PRAYER

While God's special providence, in the blessings it brings, far transcends the specific requests of his children, it is nevertheless vitally related to and conditioned upon their faith, their piety, and their prayers. While we may properly pray for things pertaining to our temporal and physical life, remembering that God will answer such prayers only in so far as and in such manner as he deems best, yet the Scriptures, if we have correctly interpreted them, encourage us to make spiritual blessings the main object of our prayers. Over and over again we must quote Christ's word of admonition, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," because herein is the essence of the New Testament teaching on this subject. But, however spiritual these words, we should not overlook the fact that this divine injunction is both preceded and followed by the strongest assurances of the most minute and ceaseless provision for all our temporal and physical wants by the loving Heavenly Father. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." In keeping with this Scripture, the poet has written:

"Make you His service your delight;
Your wants shall be His care."

But while it is true that God has promised to make our wants his care, we should remember that he has promised this only to that devout and godly number of pious, praying souls who "seek first the kingdom of God, and

his righteousness." His general providence is alike to all, by which "he maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." But it is only "to them that love God" that it is promised that "all things work together for good," and the proof of this love is found in our obedience to his commandments and self-sacrificing service to our fellow men.

It thus appears that whatever limitations may be found in special providence are imposed not by the arbitrary will and favoritism of God, but by the lack of faith and love and fidelity to duty on the part of men. Nor do they who are the recipients of the blessings of special providence desire or seek to have it limited to themselves. He spoke not for himself alone, but for all God's faithful and elect children who gave expression to his own glowing faith in Divine providence in the following beautiful words—and it is inconceivable that any one but a devout believer in a personal God could comfort himself and others with such an expression as is found in these words of faith in a providence that is at once minute and special and at the same time general and universal.

"The very hairs of our head are numbered by our Heavenly Father, and not even the life of a sparrow that he has made is extinguished without his notice. There is not an infant's wail, a sigh of anguish, a groan of pain, or a word of prayer breathed in the humblest abode that he does not hear. Over all our struggles and toils he stoops with a loving eye, and with a heart anxious that the discipline he has established for us may do us good. He knows all our doubts and fears; he rejoices in all our worthy hopes and joys. When we kneel, he sees us; when we pray, he hears. His presence envelops us, his

knowledge comprehends us, his power upholds us. All law and all being are alike dependent, movement by movement, upon him for existence. The ultimate root of every flower that bends beneath its weight of dew is planted in his will. It is his breath that breaks the bosom of the sea into billows; it is his smile that soothes it again to rest. The sky that bends over us is but the visible image of his loving bosom, holding myriads of worlds in the infinite depths of his tenderness. Let not that infinite love be hidden to the eye of faith by the showers of blessings which come from it, borne on the wings of nature's laws."

"If God has passed over the affairs of my life to the control of a law, or a series of laws," says Dr. J. G. Holland, whose words we here condense, "then, so far as I am concerned, he is dethroned. If any law of the universe stands between me and the direct ministry of God to my wants and my worthy wishes and aspirations, then I may as well pray to my next-door neighbor as to him. Thus providence is to me a question which involves the very existence of God. If law is a greater and a more powerful thing than he who established it, then to me he is practically of no account. I live and move and have my being in law, and not in him. I sprang from law, I exist in law, and I am carried on by law, I know not whither. Thus, if there be not a God of providence who ministers to my daily individual wants, and prescribes for me the discipline of my life, a God who hears me when I cry to him, and holds immediate relations with me every moment of my life, so far as I am concerned there is no God at all. It is only a God of providence that can by any possibility call out our affections or hold us to allegiance. Everything that passes under the name of religion becomes a mockery

and a delusion the moment we place him behind laws, which, like prison bars, restrain him from all participation in human affairs. I know of no skepticism more fatal to the development of religion in the heart than that which dethrones the God of providence. In vain shall we look for a true piety among those who, through absorption in scientific pursuits, or devotion to the details of natural laws in mechanical and similar callings, are brought to the deification of law. The moment the mind swings loose from a belief in providence, it plunges helpless and overwhelmed into a wild waste, from which there is, and can be, no extrication while life endures. But the moment we recognize God as supreme in power, and infinitely good and loving toward all his intelligent creatures, that moment we admit the doctrine of universal and special providence."

This minute, tender, and all-embracing love of the Heavenly Father for his children has been described by Dr. Fosdick in words both beautiful and comforting. It is from his volume titled "The Meaning of Prayer" that we quote:

In this vast universe how can we picture God as caring for every individual thing, even to stricken sparrows and to the hairs of our head? Consider, however, the scientific truth of gravitation, that the whole earth rises to meet a child's ball, just as truly as the ball falls to meet the earth, and that only the lack of sensitiveness in our instruments prevents us from measuring the earth's ascent as it responds to the pull of the child's toy. Can we imagine that? Is it not unimaginable, though plainly true? And if in a gravitate system a whole planet moves to meet a tossed ball, we ought not to dismiss, for reasons of weak imagination, the truth that in a love-system of persons, the Eternal God responds to each child's approach.

Many a man's faith is undone and his prayers stopped by the appalling contrast between the size of the world and his own smallness. The *microscope*, however, should counteract a little the disheartening influence of the *telescope*. It is evident that the Power which cares for the stars cares for all things with utter disregard of size. Inside any

common pin as marvelous activity is going on as ever was present among the stars. Here are electrons so many and so small that the race in a million years could not count them, and yet not one electron touches another. In comparison with their size they are as far apart as the planets of a solar system. Endlessly they revolve about each other, and no one ever slips by an infinitesimal degree from the control of law. Not strong reason but weak imagination leads us to be terrified by the mere size of the universe into the thought that God cannot care for us. So far as physical nature has any testimony to bear on the matter at all, she says, "There is nothing too great for the Creator to accomplish, and nothing too small for him to attend to. The microscopic world is his, as well as the stars."

Metternich on one occasion said to Napoleon that if he carried through a certain proposed campaign, it would call for the sacrifice of a million men. "What care I for that?" haughtily exclaimed Napoleon. "What are a million men to me?" Over against such heartless indifference and lack of love and concern for men individually and collectively as this, is the love and care of our great God and Father and of Him who, taking our flesh, loved us and gave himself for us.

"Among so many, can He care?
Can special love be everywhere?
From the great spaces, vague and dim,
May one small household gather Him?
I asked: my soul bethought of this;
In just that very place of His
Where He hath put and keepeth you,
God hath no other thing to do."

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERPRETING AND MISINTERPRETING
PROVIDENCE

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support,
That to the heights of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

—*John Milton.*

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.
Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour:
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.
Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

—*William Cowper.*

VII

INTERPRETING AND MISINTERPRETING PROVIDENCE

No one who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, who believes in Divine providence, and prays truly Christian prayers, prays that God will help him to get rid of all sin, be holy in heart and outward life, and serve to the utmost of his ability his fellow men—no such man is in any danger of making any hurtful misinterpretation of God's providential dealings with his own soul. But there are those who misinterpret providence, especially as it concerns passing events, and thereby do the Christian religion very great harm. To see a Divine providence where it is not, and not to see it where it is, are equally hurtful. It behooves us, as much as is possible, that we learn what God is like and so acquaint ourselves with his ways that we be quick to see what he does for our own souls but slow to declare with confidence, as the manner of some is, that this or that event out of the ordinary that befalls our fellow men is God-sent.

1. HASTY AND HURTFUL INTERPRETATIONS OF PROVIDENCE

To what extent may we, then, having studied God's providential methods as revealed in the Scriptures, in nature, in human history, and in personal experience, venture to interpret providence as it applies to current events in our own lives and in the lives of others? Experience and observation both warn us alike against too great haste and against too great confidence in our in-

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terpretations of providence. Hasty misinterpretations of providence in its bearing on present passing events frequently become fruitful sources of skepticism for the future.

Some people are much given to interpreting providence. Certain ills or misfortunes come to a bad man; they are quick to assert that it is a divine judgment sent upon him in view of his sin. Certain blessings come to a good man; they are sure the blessings are heaven-sent in view of his extraordinary piety. A den of vice perchance burns down: it is, say they, a divine judgment, in view of the owner's corrupt character and ill-gotten gains. But presently the property of an unquestionably pious and consecrated Christian man is swept away by the flames! A church building is struck by lightning and destroyed! What now is the "providence"? The "oracles" fail to explain; and so they do in innumerable other cases, as, for example, when two men, a saint and sinner, are prostrated on beds of sickness. The former, in spite of prayer and piety, continues to grow worse, and perhaps dies; while the other, without piety or prayer, is restored to health.

All of which goes to show that God has not made us interpreters of his providence except for ourselves; and even much of that which we sincerely believe comes to us in a graciously providential manner we can well afford to keep as a sacred secret between ourselves and our God, seeing that God has not furnished us with any means of absolutely proving to others that what has happened to us might not have happened, under similar circumstances, to others, even to sinful men. Many a Christian man comes to see that the ills that have happened to him—the loss of property, the terrible spell of sickness, disappointment and failure to realize cherished

hopes and expectations, and the like, things that, at the time, he would not interpret as providential—are among the best things that were ever sent upon him, in that they made him holier and more useful. “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter,” are words in which Jesus warns us against being too hasty in our judgments of God’s ways, of what he does or what he fails to do. The poet Cowper had long studied the mysteries of Divine providence before he wrote:

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter
And he will make it plain.”

That is, in his own good time he will make it plain. A great artist once said that he never permitted “bairns or fools” to look at his paintings until they were finished. Only artists or mature and wise men might see them when only half finished. The wisest and best men alone are capable of pronouncing judgment upon God’s unfinished providences. Such are the mysteries of providence which are always enveloping human life that Christian disciples of every age and name stand in need of the comforting assurance given in the words of the Master just quoted—an assurance made profoundly needful when we have to wait not only many years, but wait perchance even for the life to come before we can fully know why things in our earthly life and lot were as they were.

2. SOME NOTABLE ATTEMPTS AT INTERPRETING PROVIDENCE

Men are accustomed to refer to good things only as providential. “In popular discourse,” says Sir James

Stephen, "we call those events providential which seem to us to prevent, or to cure, or to mitigate sorrow, or tend to induce some positive benefit; and the man who was prevented the other day from embarking on the ship which was wrecked, called his escape providential. To have spoken in that manner of the embarkation of the family who were drowned in the wrecked vessel would have shocked a common feeling or prejudice."

Possibly we cannot better show the delicacy, the difficulty, and the danger of interpreting providence with the confidence that characterizes some who engage in this business than by presenting a few historic incidents which show clearly that one's point of view has much to do with his interpretation of an event as "providential" or otherwise.

An intoxicated man at the railroad station in Scotland by mistake some years ago took the wrong train of two leaving the station in opposite directions. The train he should have taken was the one swept by the storm off the bridge into the Firth of Forth when all on board were drowned. He escaped death because his intoxication led to his making the mistake. Many others, sober and sane, made no mistake, and were drowned. Shall the man whose escape from death was due to his intoxication call it a special providence in his behalf, and shall he further argue that Divine providence has thereby approved of intoxication? Plainly, we would say that this would be an unwarranted and absurd inference, that no such interpretation of providence is permissible. But suppose the drunken man, reflecting on his escape from death, should argue that the God who in his providence had thus saved him from death under such remarkable circumstances was henceforth entitled to his sincere and lifelong gratitude and devotion, and that the best way

to show his gratitude would be to devote his life to the service of God and man to the utmost of his ability from that moment; and suppose this his conversion should be followed by a sober, holy, and useful life of blessed service spent in saving multitudes from sin—would anyone, in view of his subsequent life, think he was misinterpreting providence as it concerned him personally, if he should ever thereafter regard his escape from death as providential, as a special providence in his behalf? And might he not very truly say: "As for me, I was working evil against myself; but God turned it into good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save myself and through me other people alive"? Whether any particular event in a man's life is providential or not, depends indeed upon God, but it also depends upon the man himself.

Our supposition that the drunkard who may chance to escape death because of his drunkenness will repent and become a holy and useful man, under conditions such as we have cited, is wholly gratuitous. We have no knowledge that the drunken man referred to ever repented of his sin and became a Christian as a result of his peculiar escape from death. The probability is that he continued in his habits of intemperance. Certain it is that ninety-nine out of every hundred of intoxicated mortals bring on their death rather than escape from death as a result of their intoxication. This proves that he who ventures to interpret providence by citing individual instances should make a long and large induction of cases before he is warranted in drawing any inferences and conclusions with confidence as to the reliability of his results. While it may be true that one now and then is "plucked as a brand from the burning," those who constitute God's great army of providential pilgrims and the mul-

titudes who are glorifying him and advancing his kingdom in the earth are those who have long lived in fellowship with him and have kept far away from the perilous paths of sin.

Over against this Firth of Forth disaster let us now cite another more famous and important incident in English history.

In 1588 the largest and most powerful fleet of warships that had ever been assembled were brought together by Philip of Spain and sent against Queen Elizabeth and Protestant England. Its one hundred and thirty-two vessels, bearing twenty-eight thousand soldiers and seamen, was proclaimed by Philip the "Invincible Armada." Never had England in all her history so much cause for panic and fear of the results of battle, and never did the nation betake itself so much both to prayer and to preparation as on this occasion. But after the utmost had been done by way of preparation it was found that only four of her eighty vessels were as large as the smallest of the Spanish ships. The queen, reviewing her army and her frail fleet, said, "Though I have but the feeble body of a woman, I have the heart of a king, and of a king of England, too"; and, giving her royal commands, she bade them trust in God and fight as brave Britons only could fight. The results of that famous and historic sea battle in the English Channel are well known—how that the little British boats moved almost unharmed amid the great ships of the Spanish fleet, sinking some and burning others, and how the remnant trying to escape through the North Sea encountered a great storm in which many of the fleeing vessels were sunk, leaving afloat only fifty battered ships of the "Invincible Armada," and these, filled with the wounded, the sick, and the dying, returned in humiliating and hopeless de-

feat to Spain. The very life of the Protestantism of England lay in the scales awaiting the results of that battle. Did Divine providence have anything to do with the issues of that battle? How shall it be interpreted? The pious, praying Spanish monk, devout disciple of papal Christianity, cannot see the Divine providence in it; but the people of England then and ever since have felt that in all their history there has never been an event where the hand of God was more manifestly present than in the defeat of that Spanish Armada. Queen Elizabeth not only interpreted it as providential, but had struck off in commemoration of it a medal which bore this inscription: "God blew with his winds, and they were scattered!"

But this is by no means the highest and best proof of God's hand in England's preservation and progress through the centuries of her history—the destruction of her enemy's ships in a storm at sea. For many would say, and have said, that God had nothing *special* to do with the results of that battle, seeing that, as we well know, not always has the right side triumphed in battle. That higher and better credential can be found only in that which is ethical and spiritual—in the moral character of her people and the moral influence of the nation and its leaders, and the moral and spiritual results of that unique battle and victory. Think for one moment what dire religious and moral consequences would have resulted to England—and to America and the world—if England had been utterly crushed that day! Think of what the loss would be to the Christian civilization of the modern world, if the great Anglo-Saxon race and the English nation had not come as mighty moral forces into the history of the world during the last five centuries. We should ourselves hesitate to interpret the destruc-

tion of the Spanish Armada as specially providential in its bearing on England if it had not been followed by consequences of great moral significance and lasting value not only to England but to the whole world.

But let us cite another case; this one from recent history, and a case it is that will likely be accepted by the average reader, at least if he be an American or an Englishman, as a true and altogether proper instance of special Divine providence. We take it from Prof. James Strahan's volume titled "God in History":

Every free nation has sacred records of this or that decisive historical event regarding which it can only say: "This was the Lord's doing, and it is wondrous in our eyes." Already all the free peoples of the world have learned to regard the battle of the Marne in that light. When we have heard all that has been said, all that has been told of the circumstances of that battle, we may well feel that we can only explain the event on the supposition that Providence on that day helped the weaker things to confound those that were mightier.

But, while this interpretation of the battle of the Marne is very agreeable to us Americans and our allies in the late world war, how is it with the Germans and their allies, among whom there were and are multitudes of praying and God-fearing people who, while believing in Divine providence, also believe that it would have been better for the world, and for the coming of the kingdom of Christ, if the war had terminated differently? No reader can fail to couple this notable event in the late war with the destruction of the famous Spanish Armada to which we have just referred, when England and Protestant Christianity were saved from a catastrophe which would have changed for the worse the whole course of modern history in Western Europe and in America. It is only as the results of battles prove that the victors were on God's side both then and thereafter that we are now justified, and shall continue to be jus-

tified as time goes on, in saying that God was on their side. Men may hastily and superficially conclude that God is on their side because they are victors and things are going to suit them, and they may infer, and in all sincerity feel, that a very special providence is favoring them, but, before they can be absolutely sure that they are the recipients and beneficiaries of the special blessing of Divine providence, they must know that they are on God's side. And the proof of this is found in the moral and spiritual results that follow the event or events that are being providentially interpreted.

And we must not overlook the fact, as we try to interpret history providentially, that, because "to the victors belong the spoils," the so-called "spoils" of war have many a time brought moral and spiritual decadence to the victors, thus turning victory into moral defeat; whereas those who have been defeated, and ought to have been defeated, have many a time been led by the lesson they learned in their defeat, and the way they used their defeat, to transform defeat into ultimate moral victory for themselves and others. It behooves all those who were on the victorious side in the battle of the Marne to see to it that their claim—that they and the righteous God of battles fought on the same side that day—shall be vindicated as true by their making the "spoils of war" to be in this case, whatever else they may or may not include, moral and spiritual results so beneficent and Godlike to themselves and all others, that none can successfully refute their high claim. And let us also cherish the hope that, if the defeat of those who lost on that fateful day was because the righteous God of battles was against them, they may turn their defeat into ultimate moral victory both for themselves and others.

3. SOME QUESTIONABLE INTERPRETATIONS OF PROVIDENCE

As a further study both in the interpretation and in the popular misinterpretation of special providence, let us select from Foster's famous collection of "Remarkable Providences" three instances, or examples, as follows:

(1) In the days of the Reformation, Brentius of Württemberg, being pursued by persecuting soldiers, escaped into a hayloft and concealed himself under the hay. The soldiers entered the place and ran their bayonets up through the hay, without detecting him. Every day for fourteen days, a hen laid an egg in the hay, which was his only means of support. Then the supply ceased, which he took as an intimation of Providence that it would now be safe to come out from his concealment. He found that the soldiers had just left the town; and he was able to seek a place of safety.

(2) Josephus relates that Alexander the Great, while engaged at the siege of Tyre, sent a demand for tribute and auxiliaries to the high priest at Jerusalem. He refused because he was under treaty obligations to Darius. At this Alexander was enraged and vowed vengeance upon the Jews. After the reduction of Gaza, Alexander, with his army thirsting for plunder, hastened to Jerusalem. As they drew near the city they met a great procession of the people in white robes, headed by the priests in fine linen, and led by the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, his miter on his head, and on his breast the golden breastplate upon which the name of God was engraved. Alexander, alone, in advance of his army, adored that name and saluted the high priest. The great captain's friends were astonished at him, and supposed he had become insane. A more effectual victory had been gained than if the city had withstood a siege. Years before, Alexander had a dream in which he saw the high priest in this very dress. Now he recognized the hand of God. The high priest, himself, was instructed in a dream how to receive him.

(3) A good man, who had served God many years, was sitting one day, with several persons, eating a meal upon a bank very near a pit, and he was nearest to the mouth of it. Whilst he was eating, a pigeon came, fluttered in his breast, and slightly pecked him. In about five minutes, it came again, and did the same. The old man then said: "I will follow thee, pretty messenger, and see where thou comest from." He rose up to follow the bird; and while he was away, the banks of the pit fell in, and his companions were all killed. This happened at a mine near Swansea in Wales.

To show the hurtfulness of citing such exceptional and unusual occurrences as these as especially "remarkable providences," we may call attention to facts that make the use of them for this purpose utterly misleading.

In the first instance here cited, we call attention to the implication that if the pursuing soldiers had discovered the concealed man and put him to death, there would have been no particular providence, or less providence at least, in his case, no matter how dutifully he had died. And if no hen had laid her eggs in the hay beside him, shall we say that this would prove that he had a less special and divine providence over his life? And if, instead of continuing for fourteen days, she had ceased to lay her eggs after only three or four days, shall we say that *that* would have meant that Providence was bidding him come forth at once from his hiding place? Or, if she had continued to lay her eggs for twice fourteen days, shall we say that he should have remained, thus instructed by Providence, for twenty-eight days before coming forth? To make these observations and ask these questions, is but to show the utter absurdity of building up a doctrine of special providence on such accidental circumstances and unusual coincidences as met in this case.

And, referring to the second of these instances here cited, shall we build a doctrine of special providence as it concerns both saints and sinners on the accidents and strange coincidences that are sometimes associated with dreams and say that high priests and other martyrs and sufferers who had no dreams to warn and save them were less protected and less guided by Providence than was this high priest whom Alexander, the voluptuous, spared? To ask this question is to answer it.

And, coming to the third of these "remarkable provi-

dences," we cannot refrain from suggesting that it would have been a greater and more remarkable providence if the pigeon had come a little sooner and gone to each and every man in the company, and pecked and fluttered so as to toll them all away from the place of danger and death. For, if it was a special providence that rescued this one good man from death, we cannot but ask, was it also a special providence that prearranged the caving in of the bank with a view to bringing about the death of all the other persons present, concerning whom nothing is said as to whether they were good men or bad?

4. SANE, SAFE, AND ASSURING INTERPRETATIONS OF PROVIDENCE

Now is not the way out of these confusing and conflicting interpretations of providence to be found along the line of thought that we have indicated? If so, we will regard all events as coming under Divine providence and as being related to God. But among his free creatures there are some with willing wills, ever seeking to know and to do the will of their Creator, and others who have opposing wills that are indifferent to the will of God and disobedient to his commands. The events of human life and history that reveal God's ruling and governing hand are those in which he has willing and co-operating wills through which to work. The supreme aim and end of all his providential activities are the accomplishment of moral and spiritual results, and these mainly through his creatures who possess high moral character and have willing wills. In the case of disobedient and opposing wills God's providential government consists in overruling rather than in ruling. While things material and physical often have moral value and take on moral significance because of their bearing

on the accomplishment of moral and spiritual results, yet in the main there is no difference in the operation of nature's laws as between the evil and the good—the sun shines and the rain falls on them both alike.

If, now, one wishes to find instances of God's special providence, let him not search for them among these occasional, accidental, and unusual occurrences and coincidences that take place now and then in the experience of individuals and more rarely in the larger and longer life of nations, instances of unusual happenings in the realm of material and natural law. Let him, on the contrary, find instances, no matter whether they be rare or frequent, where God's will and purposes are unmistakably manifest, where his will and word find expression in the moral and spiritual doings of men and women, where the material is subordinated to the moral and the physical is made to serve the spiritual, where the dominant desire in whatever is done is the good of one's fellow man and the glory of God—let him find one man or many men, in one place or in many places, at one time or many times, in health or in sickness, in the midst of life or in the presence of death—let him find instances where all these conditions and evidences of God's presence meet, and there he may confidently expect to find what may be rightly designated as special providences. The faith that finds God here has something sure and steadfast on which to build.

Among the most precious and prized and special of all God's providences is divine guidance. This most valuable of spiritual blessings is absolutely guaranteed to each and every child of God who meets, in a life of abiding faith and continuous obedience to the Divine will, each and every condition which Christ has laid down for the enjoyment of this high privilege. But this

guidance is not given—indeed, in the very nature of the case, could not be given—to those whose wills and lives are not in accord with the will of God. It is the latter class of individuals who are forever looking for special providences in the irregular, uncertain, and capricious occurrences and coincidences of life. But this is utterly to misinterpret providence. They are unwilling to pay the price and meet the conditions of God's real and true providences—the price is too ethical and spiritually costly for them. To see a providence where there is no providence is almost as hurtful to religion and injurious to Christian faith as to fail to see a providence where one really exists.

There is no point in Christian experience, says Professor Bousset, where doubt is more liable to arise and yet where a sane, clear, and strong faith is more important than in the matter of belief in the reality of Divine providence and God's care for the individual soul that confidently trusts him and gives expression to that trust in prayer. That we may find peace and comfort in this faith in providence and prayer, it is important for us to remember that we are not here to be made happy, as men generally estimate happiness, but we are here to know and do the will of God, to accomplish the task which providence has assigned to us in life, and it is in so doing alone that we will attain the highest aim and end of our existence. The Christian disciple who believes thus and lives thus will not fail to recognize in the guidance of his life a friendly, fatherly Power which surrounds him continually and everywhere with loving care, leading him on to life's goal, not, indeed, by any audible voice calling to him, or by any hard and harsh law driving and compelling him, but by thoughts and feelings and impulses within, which inner impulses will

be none the less truly his own because they are brought about by and through Divine guidance.¹

Is there anything, then, of which the child of God may be assured? Indeed there is, and something very precious. For, however much men may be mystified by faltering and conflicting interpretations of providence, and however serious and hurtful many misinterpretations may be, "nevertheless," says St. Paul, "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2: 19.) The seal of a document is something that goes so deeply through and through the very fiber of the parchment and is stamped so indelibly in inerasable characters, that even when the fire has turned the document to ashes, you can still read in the very ashy film the imperishable credential that no fire can destroy. There are some truths of the Christian religion that are so wrought into the very frame and fiber of Christian experience and faith, some covenants between God and man so written, not with ink that fades but with "the everlasting blood of the covenant," drawn from the very heart of God, and from the inmost and deepest experiences of his children; some truths and covenants that are so sacred and vital that God, who cannot lie, hath sworn with an immutable and sacred oath, to keep his part of the divine-human covenant. But it must never be forgotten that the human side of this "seal of the covenant" reads, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," and only those whose departure from iniquity is without reserve, continuous and complete, can possibly comfort themselves with the preciousness of the divine pledge involved in the words:

¹See "The Faith of a Modern Protestant," pp. 51, 52.

"The Lord knoweth them that are his." For those, however, who are faithful to this and all other divinely imposed conditions of the Heavenly Father's love and care, the Scriptures abound in words of most blessed assurance. God can turn even the sadness and sorrows of life into a light that shines all the brighter because it shines in the darkness, or casts its benign and glowing radiance on a dark background of suffering and sorrow.

It is interesting to observe the note of assurance with which St. Paul here and elsewhere describes his faith in Divine providence. Nor could words be more confident than these: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." (Rom. 8: 28.) And these: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5: 1.) It is important that these last words be coupled with those that precede, for Paul never claimed to have any assurance that the providence of God would save him and others who love God from trials and tribulations—indeed he knew that, so far as he was concerned, trials and sufferings manifold awaited him wherever he went in the service of his Lord. He had no assurance that he and others equally faithful would be preserved from sickness and suffering and death. But he did claim to know that if, in the discharge of life's duties, death came to him and dissolved the earthly house of his tabernacle, there was awaiting him in the heavens a house that could not be dissolved. The things eternal for him were spiritual, not material.

He that interprets human life and Divine providence in this manner will not look for the signs of God's presence and power in the irregular and unusual occurrences and coincidences of life, but in the evidences

he has, both within and without, that he is seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and loving and serving his fellow men to the utmost of his ability. To such a one life will be full of "special providences."

To him, then, who truly believes in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and who will duly consider all the facts and lessons of life, in himself and others, in individuals and in nations, and not for a day merely but patiently as the years come and go, it will be made plain that "God is in his heaven, and all is right with the world," and that all things work together for the spiritual good of those who love God and who prove their love for him by loving and serving their fellow men.

We conclude, then, that there is, according to the Scriptures, an ever-watchful providence exercised by the Heavenly Father over his faithful and loving children, which is ceaselessly working to secure their ever-increasing holiness and usefulness here and their perfect happiness in a future state of existence. To prepare rational and immortal free agents through holiness and usefulness here for happiness hereafter is the aim and end of this all-embracing providence of God which includes within its loving care every human being except such as exclude themselves therefrom by their own willful and persistent sin. In the accomplishment of this end, what the world counts as the misfortunes and ills of life often contribute far more than what, in the estimation of men, are accounted the greatest earthly blessings. There is no providential highway to a state here that is free from life's ills and that abounds in temporal and earthly blessings to the good. But there is a royal and holy highway, along which moves a providential pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, leading the children of the covenant, through lives of

loving service and sacrifice, to a holy land of promise, the goal of a gracious providence. They who journey along this highway bear this seal: "The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." They who bear this name and this seal are the divinely chosen instruments and agents of that larger and wider providence that is ever working to establish a perfect kingdom of righteousness in the whole earth, that kingdom of God, to inaugurate which, in its Messianic form, our Lord became incarnate, and to consummate which, in its final and perfect form, he reigns from heaven, and will continue to reign until, having "put all enemies under his feet," he shall "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father"

"That God who ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

CHAPTER EIGHT

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN PROGRESS

It is by making religious experience, instead of theological tradition, the criterion of truth that the Christian Church has been able to keep pace with progress and to appropriate the best thought of the age without the violation of any of its fundamental principles. It does not look with disapproving or suspicious eye upon the effort of the historian to uncover the past or of the scientist to reveal the secrets of the natural world. The idea of progress is congenial to the Christian mind; and they who truly represent the Christian faith of to-day believe that Jesus Christ is in the stream of this mighty modern time, that he rides its flood and controls it for good. The Christian Church does not feel that, in order to accomplish its providential and saving mission in the world, it must remain apart in utter isolation, but rather, like the Gulf Stream, it flows upon the bosom of the great ocean of human interests and mingles its warm and life-giving waters with the whole current of human aspiration.—*Gilbert T. Rowe.*

A scientific passion for facts is greatly needed by the Christian mind, but this scientific valuation of facts needs to have its facts related to the great Christian experience of God's presence in his world, and needs also to be enriched with Christ's supreme appreciation of present values. The life that lives solely by the values that are handled in the laboratory soon loses its sensitiveness to all those finer things that keep the soul alive. There is no influence that better enables the scientific specialist to see life whole, and to keep his soul a treasure-store of abiding riches than steadily to live in the light which comes from the revelation of the fullness of life in Christ.—*O. E. Brown, in "The Christicization of American Life."*

I believe that in the continued influence of Jesus we find the greatest force tending to the improvement of the individual character and to the elevation of public opinion, and so to the elevation of mankind in all desirable directions.—*Professor M. M. Metcalf.*

VIII

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN PROGRESS

A STATIC universe would represent and reveal only a static God. The idea of progress enters into the very conception of Divine providence as this doctrine is understood and taught in the Christian religion. That all things as governed and guided by God not only move, but move forward and upward, from the lower to the higher, from that which is good to that which is better, and from the better ever toward that which is best as the final goal—this is the only conception of the aim and end of Divine government that is worthy of or consistent with the Christian idea of God. The world in which we live comprehends and blends within its compass the physical and spiritual, matter and mind, unthinking things and self-conscious, rational, free agents.

Man is a physico-spiritual being, and as such he is part and parcel of both the world of matter and the world of mind. God's providence, potent and progressive, is related alike to both worlds. God's government of matter is according to certain uniform principles which we call the laws of nature; his government of persons is according to the laws of mental and moral freedom. It is the office of science and philosophy to discover and interpret the laws of matter and of mind. Theistic science and philosophy interpret all things, whether conceived of as matter or mind, as sustaining an essential and vital relationship to a personal God, whose providential government and guidance of the world are characterized by ceaseless progress.

What is meant by human progress has been well defined by Professor Eugene W. Lyman of Union Theological Seminary as follows:

Human progress is an immaterial, spiritual matter as truly as a material matter. It includes moral discoveries as well as physical inventions, gains in spiritual wisdom as well as the advancement of physical science, and the institutions that nourish man's higher life as well as the commerce and industry that feed, clothe, transport, and amuse him. And these two sides of human progress are so closely bound up together as to make one story. Making room for both the material and the spiritual and their interactions, we may define human progress as the unfolding of human power for the achieving of goods and the attainments that result. Progress is essentially a matter of the release and control of power. And mankind has made momentous gains in this respect since it started on the long trail of history. This appears in three great realms: physical nature, personal life, and society. In the realm of physical nature these gains have been in the modern time swift and miraculous. In the realm of personal life we have the slow but cumulative effects of education and religion. In the realm of society in the mass the gains have been fluctuating and uneven. Yet anyone who compares 1925 A.D. with 1925 B.C. will not doubt that real and momentous gains have been made. And out of this vast increase in the release and control of power has come a multitude of goods that enter in the most various ways into making up the meaning and value of life.

1. IMPEDIMENTS TO PROGRESS

Although progress is characteristic of God's government of the world, Divine providence and the intellectual and moral progress of the world are both conditioned upon human free agency and limited by man's failure to do his part. Whoever would understand providence must understand the patience of God in dealing with men who are dull of mind and slow of heart and weak of will. More and more men are coming to see God revealed in nature and in life; and the more they see him, the more they love him; and the more they love him, the more do they strive to do his will.

Progress is often real when it is yet slow and not dis-

cernible to the observer. Although the hands of the clock move in a circle, the clock is none the less fulfilling its law of life and progress. Although here and there along its course there may be eddies in the current of the river where the waters seem simply to be going round and round and not forward, the stream as a whole is going forward there just as truly as in the whirling rapids. "In the development of the tree of life," says a recent writer, using LaMarck's figure, "some branches turn down, others maintain a horizontal position, while yet others grow upwards, all having issued alike from the trunk. Yet the tree is ever rising in its topmost branches, and this increase or intensifying of certain properties and capacities of living things, both in the general average and particularly in the higher levels, is what we mean by progress." Nowhere do we need to apply this principle to the interpretation of progress more than in studying the providential movements of history that take place under the Divine government of the world. In providence God and man are working in copartnership. When God created the human will he set limitations upon his own progress in accomplishing results.

It was in 1688, when the age of Louis XIV was at its climax, that a noted French author, Charles Perrault, wrote a book in which he maintained in all seriousness that the climax and period of perfection in progress in world history had been reached, beyond which nothing higher and better was to be looked for. "Our age," said he, "has, in some sort, arrived at the summit of perfection. And since for some years the rate of progress is much slower and appears now almost insensible, it is pleasant to think that probably there are not many things for which we need envy future generations." The outlook into the future revealed to this Frenchman's

vision no such advance as had marked the slow and toilsome ascent of mankind up to his good day! The goal of all human progress had been attained, and it was positively "pleasant to think" that nothing higher and better awaited the world! Before we criticize Perrault for his vain words and his failure to take God and Divine providence into his idea of progress, we may do well to remember that there have appeared from time to time in the history of the Christian Church groups of theologians who have undertaken to write creeds for which they claimed such a degree of perfection that they sought to make it impossible for any future generation to alter in any way the perfect interpretation which they thought they themselves had given to God and other things that enter into the Christian faith. Not in Job's day alone did they all live who have found it "pleasant to think" and vain enough to confess, "we are the people, and wisdom will die with us"—or, "if it does not die with us, it will certainly not add aught of value to what we have written!" Possibly, if Perrault could come back to the earth, he would find himself compelled to admit that there has been not a little real progress in the world since the age of Louis XIV.

The greatest impediment to Divine providence and human progress, next to sin, is the ignorance and blindness that not only fail to seek light and truth, but fail to see and recognize and acknowledge the truth that God has revealed in nature and in Jesus Christ. And there is perfect harmony between these two sources of Divine revelation, if they be rightly interpreted. It is impossible for human progress to be steady and permanent, and in accord with Divine providence, except it be based on a true and accurate knowledge of the world, physical, mental and moral, as God has made it.

2. FAITH INCREASES WITH PROGRESS IN KNOWLEDGE

It is remarkable to what extent men in times past have thought that only in the mysterious and hidden and unknown things in nature and in human life and experience was God especially to be found at work. That which is regular and simple and known in the realm of natural law was not thought to need God to explain it or account for it. The occasional and irregular, the unusual and extraordinary, the accidental and unaccountable, the exceptional and remarkable—these are the features and characteristics that were supposed to designate and define the specially supernatural and divine among the occurrences and coincidences that belong to human life and experience. The increase of knowledge pertaining to the laws of nature and their operations which has marked the advancement of science has seemed to some to be directed toward getting rid of God in the ongoing of the world—as if to explain how anything is brought about by and through the working of nature's laws is tantamount to saying that God has nothing to do with it. The result is that many of the traditional conceptions of Divine providence, and particularly of what is commonly designated as special providence, seem now more and more, in this age of science, to be irreconcilable with the conception of God as the immanent and ever-active personal Being without whose presence and power the laws of nature would have no existence. According to this latter conception of God and nature, to find out how anything is brought about under the operation of nature's laws is simply to find out how God does it. To find a special Divine providence, therefore, not in the natural and normal but only in things unnatural and abnormal, has now come to be not only an anomaly but an anachronism. An eminent author says:

At an earlier stage of human culture, science was regarded with suspicion. It was feared that, if men found out too much about how things were made and managed, no room would be left for faith. It was thought that when a square inch of space, or soil, or of water, or of life was analyzed and understood, God was ruled out of it. Providence was recognized as operating in the dark, but not in the light; in the unknown, but not in the known; in disease, but not in health; in railway collisions, but not in the train that reached the station; in steamboat explosions, but not in the ship that made the port; in the drought that blighted the crops, but not in the seasons that made them grow; in the electricity that struck the house, but not in the lightning that cleared the atmosphere; in the miracle that healed in an instant, but not in the exercise that brought health back by slow degrees. As long as the ground was vibrating in response to the pulse beats of an earthquake, it was felt that God was using the earth's foundations as so many notes to bring out the music of indignation and death. As long as the trees were rising up out of the soil to be embraced in the arms of the cyclone for a mad and awful dance, men felt that God was permitting the devil a season of sport among the powers of the air. When science came explaining difficulties, clearing up problems, rebuking disease, holding up death, analyzing earthquakes, mapping the paths of cyclones and showing the use of microbes, it appeared to a certain class of minds that little margin was to be left for the kind of faith that demands an impossibility in front of it to make it simple and complete.

But is it true that faith must fall as knowledge rises, that the creed must be shortened as science widens, and that our belief in God is in proportion to our ignorance of his methods of action? If so, then for the time to come religion will have no place in the lives of intelligent people. But it is not true that God, who made the universe and guides it, can be trusted by his children only so long as they remain ignorant of how he runs it. It is not true that faith in the Almighty must be given up as soon as we learn what his habits are. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and science, in making clear the divine procedure in creation, instead of destroying faith, is compelling it.¹

Professor J. Y. Simpson, successor to Henry Drummond in the Chair of Natural Science in New College, Edinburgh, in his recent volume on "Science and Religion," has an illuminating chapter on "The Idea of Progress." This volume, like the equally interesting

¹J. W. Lee, "The Religion of Science," pp. 78-80.

and instructive volume by Prof. J. Arthur Thomson, of Aberdeen, on the same subject, is written from the point of view of a thoroughly theistic scientist. The three principal factors that have contributed to the progress of the human race, this author declares, have undoubtedly been science, civil government, and Christianity; and it is particularly the discoveries in physical science which more than anything else have contributed to the advancement of human knowledge and the progress of mankind in a material way—and also, in a very important sense, in an intellectual way; for, although the province of science is largely in the physical realm, science itself is a triumph of mind over matter, and its growth, therefore, registers the progress of mind.

Professor Simpson has shown in his chapter on the idea and nature of progress referred to above that although we are forced to admit that progress in knowledge and increasing power over nature do not mean necessarily increase in goodness and happiness, and our material and mental progress has undoubtedly gone ahead of the ethicizing process that should always accompany advancement in physical and mental science, there is nevertheless much that can be mentioned by way of encouragement in the realm of moral and spiritual and social advancement that registers progress far beyond the past and furnishes ground for increasing hope as to the future of the human race. While the slowness and the limitations of man's moral progress are due to man and not to God, it is still true that it is in the moral and spiritual progress of mankind that we find the surest proof of Divine providence and of God's hand in human history. "The great sign of progress is the growing realization that things are so and the determination to grapple with the circumstances and to strive to amend

them. A great hospital suggests infinite suffering, but when we realize that seventy per cent of the cases within its walls are there because of removable causes, the blame of which rests on the individual himself or on the community which has permitted the conditions under which he lived and worked, while the remaining thirty per cent (cancer, pneumonia, etc.) represent no ultimately insoluble problems to the spirit of modern medicine, the circumstances become simply a challenge to action. Never before has the vista of indefinite progress opened out so alluringly or so clearly. The basis for the belief in progress lies in the fact that man is the educable animal. Sound action consists not in shutting our eyes to the facts on the debit side, but in looking at them steadily, drawing the attention of the community to them, and studying them till the best manner of dealing with them discloses itself. . . . We maintain that under the teachings of science and of political history, and the vision that has come to men that out of all this welter of pain and debasement, of struggle and imperfection, progress toward perfection is being made, a calm confidence, deep-set, may take possession of us—a community of feeling with one who on the basis of some other kind of experience was able to say: ‘He that believeth shall not make haste.’ To refuse to believe in progress is to refuse to believe in life; and to refuse to believe in life and progress is to refuse to believe in God.”¹

Are the teachings of modern science hurtful or helpful to faith in Divine providence? Or are they neither the one nor the other? Or, shall we say, this depends wholly upon the point of view of the believer concerned?

¹See pp. 248-251 in “Landmarks in the Struggle between Science and Religion.”

3. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND SCIENCE

Men of to-day believe that the Bible was not meant to teach science, but that the Biblical writers simply reflect the scientific views of the day in which they lived. We, moreover, believe that scientists are the proper teachers of science; and we believe, further, that God is revealed in the laws of nature just as truly as he is revealed in the Scriptures, and that when scientists discover a law of nature and its uniform operations they have simply discovered God's method in creation and providence. This is without doubt the faith of most intelligent Christian believers in our day, and to those who believe thus, modern science carries within itself no perils to a theistic and Christian faith. Indeed, many devout believers in the Christian religion, both among learned theologians and devout scientists, have repeatedly declared that in the teachings of modern science they have found that which both clarifies and strengthens their faith in God and in Divine providence. If there are those who have doubts as to some of the teachings and conclusions of modern scientists concerning the origin of all existing forms of life, they can surely join in the study of nature and its laws along with all truth-seeking scientists, in the calm assurance that whatever the further study of nature may reveal and prove, it will only be a fuller revelation of God and his creative and providential methods of operation since time began.

Nothing can be more misleading and hurtful, especially to the young and rising generation who, as teachable and open-minded students of science, are found in all the accredited colleges and universities of the world, than to make modern science synonymous with the "scornful assertion of man's disreputable descent

from a monkey" as something opposed to his having been created by God. All scientists who are worthy of the name are truth-seekers in the realm of nature, and only as they can support their scientific hypotheses with adequate and satisfactory proof do these hypotheses become accredited as science. When they reach this point, and prove anything as to what has been done in nature, and how it has been done, the one thing that theistic and Christian believers are sure of is, that *that* is what God has done, and that *that* is the way *he did it*.

Christian believers can and should be calm and confident while truth-seeking scientists are finding out for us the workings and the ways of God in nature, all the uniform laws of which are *his laws*. "He that believeth," says the prophet Isaiah, "will not make haste"; and, if one really and profoundly believes in the creation and providence of God, he will not be disturbed while the scientists are pursuing their investigations, their search for truth, for facts, for reality. Let the Christian student of to-day, then, drop the anchor of his faith, not in the bottom of his own little surface-tossed bark, driven hither and thither by every passing wind of doctrine in science and theology, but drop it on the deep bedrock bottom of God's immutable truth, knowing, as he does, that God is not only in his heaven above but also in the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth.

The vital point, then, in this or that scientific theory is not, so far as Christian faith is concerned, the method and *modus operandi* of nature in the past which it advocates, but the place it gives to God and Jesus Christ, "by whom all things consist, and without whom was not anything made that was made."

The term "evolution" is one of the most widely used words in modern philosophy and science, and in litera-

ture generally; and, when employed in a broad and large sense, it is accepted all but universally as well describing God's method of conducting and improving the world to-day not less than in ages past. But it is a word that means different things to different people using it, or hearing it used. Theistic writers who espouse evolution are by no means agreed, in using the term, as to the exact contents which the word is made to carry, as to what it includes and excludes. But the principle of evolution, as something expressive of progress upward from that which is lower to that which is higher in physical nature and in spiritual life, is all but universally recognized as describing what we may call the providential method of Divine activity.

"The leading representatives of evolutionary philosophy are not yet agreed in regard to the extent to which man has been evolved, some limiting the process to his body, others extending it to his soul. Happily there is no conflict between the Bible and science as to man's place in the universe. The Bible sets man at the head of creation; science does the same thing with added emphasis, assigning him that place not merely as, in virtue of his endowments, the most distinguished of the creatures, but as the crowning result of the evolutionary process by which the known world in the long course of ages came to be what it is."¹

Professor F. H. Smith held the chair of science at the University of Virginia during a large part of the last half of the past century. How modest and devout a believer he was both in God and in science is well known to all who came in contact with him. His volumes, titled "Christ and Science" and "Nature a Witness to the Unity, the Power, and the Goodness of God," make the

¹A. B. Bruce, "The Providential Order," p. 15.

same impression on the reader as to the spirit and faith of the author. He was far from calling himself an evolutionist. The late Dr. William Sanday, the great divine, scholar, and author of Oxford, England, published many books on religion which are even better known and more widely read than these of the American professor of science. Dr. Sanday was an equally devout believer both in God and in science. Breathing a different intellectual and theological atmosphere, the Oxford scholar came to be a believer in and modest defender of the theory of evolution. I shall quote from each of these two great scholars, the scientist and the theologian, some things they wrote concerning science and religion. I feel altogether sure that Dr. Sanday would indorse fully what is here quoted from Dr. Smith, and that Dr. Smith would indorse with equal satisfaction what Dr. Sanday says. Writing on "Christ and Science," Dr. Smith says:

With the evidence of Christ's love of nature before us, it seems strange that in so many ages of the Church Christians have looked with suspicion if not with enmity on the study of the visible creation. They feared or believed that it led away from the Master, not to him. When the honest votaries of science were led to views of the world different from those which pious people had formed from a hasty interpretation of Biblical expressions never meant to teach science, they were at once classed with the infidels, and their learning was denounced as irreligious. It is not Galileo whom in this day we look upon as wrong, but the Churchmen who condemned and pursued him. We have learned slowly that to reject a creed is not of necessity irreligious, and that honest search for truth is a Christian trait in the scientist's laboratory not less than in the pastor's study.

The material universe, as we know it, discloses most wonderfully the majesty and might of the Creator, while the hidings of his power in the great realm of electricity and the world of the atom are yielding to the searching of men ineffable lessons of his wisdom. The rapidly increasing knowledge of nature is bringing out into clearer light that there is a plan in the world, and hence there must have been a designer. What the material universe taught men of God in the early ages it still teaches

—with increased force and added richness. The multiplicity of facts accumulating from year to year does not impair the unity of creation. If Christ be the maker of all worlds, there must be harmony between all worlds. The unity of the creation, physical and spiritual, lies in the unity of the Creator. It will be a glorious day when the recognition of Christ as the Master of all worlds, the source and support of all activity in all spheres, shall be complete. The movement of the age is toward Christ, not away from him. The sound thinkers of the world are more and more turning to Christ; and the day is already dawning when fair science will cast her crown at his feet and hail the Son of Mary as the Son of God—of whom and through whom and to whom are all things.

From one of Dr. Sanday's latest volumes, that titled "Divine Overruling," I quote the following:

Far back behind Moses religion had been there, struggling with conditions that we do not naturally associate with inspiration, marked by all that prodigality of experiment and slowness and uncertainty of advance that are characteristic of evolution; like the tide, advancing and retiring, retiring and advancing; gaining a little here, and losing a little there; fluctuating backward and forward, but gaining in the end and on the whole. It is impossible to think of this process as without God, though we may think of it as from our subjective point of view depending rather on the general course of Divine providence than on what we are apt to call the more direct and immediate influence of God. If we make our periods long enough, and look first at the beginning and then at the end, there can be no doubt about the progress or the reality of the Divine overruling. The ultimate balance is on the side of the good, though in intermediate and shorter periods the truth of this may be obscured.

God has thought fit to construct the universe on the principle of evolution. If we followed our own instincts and our own shortsightedness, we might expect rather that he would have acted upon some such principle as that of simultaneous perfection. It seems wiser to take the world as it is and try to understand it on the basis of the laws by which it is certainly governed. One of these laws is evolution; and it seems to have also a corollary which is not much less fertile as a principle of understanding. There is one absolute axiom, one golden rule, which seems to be correlative to the principle of evolution: that is, wherever the process of evolution exists, it must be judged by the ends and not by the beginnings. If we hold fast to this, no seeming crudities or imperfections can ever seriously trouble us. They all belong to the past, and all lie more or less behind us. They are there only to be emerged from; they exist only to be vanquished. (Author's statements abridged.)

Few of our religious leaders believe more in science and are more open-minded to the acceptance of whatever results may be reached by scientific methods of study and proof than Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, and yet few warn us more strongly than he does against confusing scientific hypotheses with accredited scientific knowledge. In his latest volume, titled "Imagination and Religion," he says: "We do not know, whatever may be surmised, that our present boasted status is anything more than provisional. Even science is confessedly a series of hypotheses, and its ripest conclusions are undergoing constant revision. We must, therefore, avoid the conceit that our order is *the* order. It is only one link in an endless chain which answers its purposes, if it does not snap. Man and the universe are still incomplete and yet in the making. The highest significance of human life regarded as a gradual deliverance from despair and futility into the liberty of the sons of God is still far short of its fulfillment. Human nature is essentially the same at every stage of its development. Its growth demands not only science but religion and all knowledge, faith, and duty consecrated in Christ to the service of God and man." (Abbreviated with slight verbal alterations.)

The late Dr. F. W. Gunsaulus called science "the handmaiden of the Lord and an angel of civilization." "If I were to describe *in* one word," said he, "the transformation of science in our day from that pagan, selfish, conceited air which has so often offended truth, to that reverent, humanity-loving, and nobler manner in which she now moves, I would say that the day of Pentecost had fully come. Revelations of the infinite in nature, like God's revelation of the infinite self in Jesus, have taken place in man's thought, and, instead of audaciously building up out of man's wisdom brilliant systems of

philosophy stretching from earth to heaven, man listens for the whispers of the Life of all life. By its half-conscious reception of Christ's ideal of man and his future, science has received the Holy Ghost." Dr. Gunsaulus was writing of "Power from Above" when he thus described the spirit and the mission of modern science.¹

Bishop F. J. McConnell, after recognizing that there has been change and progress toward truth in the attitude of the general body of Christian believers toward "the reign of law," proceeds to make demand that scientists, also, shall, in their turn, recognize and concede in many of the facts of human life the presence of spiritual forces and results which no "reign of law" can account for. We quote his words:

How trenchantly "the reign of law" was urged against Christian belief in the old days of some fifty years ago! And yet how completely this very conception has been incorporated into more recent Christian thinking! When once the Christian reasoner saw that law never could have more than instrumental function, all his fear vanished. While there are still some who imagine that there is an inherent incompatibility between the scientific idea of law and the idea of the presence of God in the world, the general understanding is fast coming to be that God works through law. The reign of law can mean nothing but the reign of whoever is back of law. The laws of nature are used to-day as never before for setting the conceptions of Christianity on high. And all we ask in return is that the scientific student be willing on his part to face facts when he meets them. If there is found an efficacy in prayer, if the power which was lodged in the Hebrew religion cannot be explained by the external historic causes at work, if there is manifestly more in the inner vitality of the conceptions of the Church than can be accounted for by the economic or social spirit of a particular period, if the beliefs of the Church are seen to be not merely effects but also causes, if above all there is in the life of the Christ a fountain of spiritual efficiency which exhausts the customary historical tabulations and classifications—if all or any of these results appear, all that we ask is that in the spirit of scientific inquirers we be allowed to take scientific account of the findings. It is more scientific to admit that some things cannot be explained on the basis of scientific principles, as we now have them, than

¹"Paths to Power," p. 278.

to maintain that everything must be classifiable within our present scientific set of pigeonholes. In any event we shall use what science we have with a spiritual motive.¹

4. TRUE SCIENCE AN AUXILIARY TO TRUE FAITH

True science is an auxiliary to faith, but it is not the only factor in religious progress. The working of Providence in humanity, says Pastor Charles A. Bourquin, of Switzerland, must not be forgotten, with its gift of great personalities who outstrip their contemporaries and release new rays of light. The doctrine of providence has nothing to fear from science; the farther science advances, the nearer it approaches to the God who is glimpsed by the human consciousness, and who was revealed by Jesus. True science is not opposed to the recognition of the Supreme Being, however it may quarrel with ideas that have been formed of him from his worshipers. Darwin was surprised at being regarded as an atheist on account of his doctrine of the transmutation of species. He merely said that he had no need of anything but the laws of nature to support his theory. The thought of attacking the theistic doctrine did not enter his mind. The truth is that science has been to many the forecourt of religion. We need only mention Isaac Newton, who uncovered his head whenever the name of God was mentioned in his presence; and Kepler, who ended his great work with the prayer: "I thank thee, O my Creator and Master, for having given me to experience such joys and ecstatic raptures in the contemplation of thy heavens. . . . If I have said anything unworthy of thee, pity and forgive me." Quatrefages, the great anthropologist, a worthy descendant of the Huguenots, considered that religion and faith were rooted in the deep needs of human nature.

¹F. J. McConnell, "Personal Christianity," p. 112.

Sir Humphry Davy, the great English chemist, looked upon religion as the lighthouse pointing the shipwrecked mariner to his homeland. Wiegand, the noted botanist, requested that the Apostles' Creed should be engraved on his tomb; and on the tombstone of Louis Pasteur, most noted and honored of French scientists, are words written by himself in the vigor of life: "Happy is he who carries a God within him, an ideal of beauty to which he is obedient—an ideal of art, an ideal of science, an ideal of the fatherland, an ideal of the virtues of the gospel." Said Lord Kelvin, among the most eminent of English scientists: "If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to a belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion." Sir William Crookes saw in nature a combination of thought and will controlling the purely material movement of atoms; behind the molecular movement that formed the world there is an unknown Force that guides the cells, leading them onward to follow a pathway that has previously been traced for them.

"While prayer," says Bourquin, "cannot be proved like a theorem in mathematics or like a scientific fact in the realm of natural law, it is nevertheless a matter of observation, experiment, and proof just as truly as mathematical and scientific facts. The religious experience may be more complex and difficult to analyze than other phenomena, but that alone should not discredit the value of the proof furnished. Religion will be all the more vital and active if harmony is established and maintained between scientific and religious faith. Science, with its certitude, ought to strengthen, not weaken, faith in Divine providence and human prayer. Dealing as it does with secondary causes, science ought to teach us to seek refuge in the one great First Cause

and to bow before Divine omnipotence." (See Dr. Bourquin's discussion of providence and prayer, titled "A Modern Apology," from which most of the thought in these last paragraphs is taken.)

Among the great American scientists of a generation ago none stands higher than Professor Agassiz, of Harvard University. But along with his belief in the uniformity of nature's laws he was a profound believer in an overruling Divine providence and in the propriety and value of prayer addressed to the personal God whose wisdom and power find expression in the laws of nature as well as in the laws of mind and spirit that prevail in the realm of free personality. He was himself a man of prayer, and as modest as he was devout and reverent. On one occasion he gathered his students on an island to investigate and study certain facts and phenomena of nature and the operations of natural law as there manifested. At the beginning of his lecture in this laboratory of nature he invited his students to unite with him in a silent prayer to the Divine Being whose works they were going to investigate. The hush and silence that followed that request of the great scientist and teacher, it was said, were deeply impressive. The Quaker poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, on hearing of the incident, was inspired to write the following lines which describe the scene in language which is at once worthy of a poet and of a scientist, and which furnish an altogether beautiful example of the spirit of worship that should characterize every one who searches for truth in the laboratory of the God of nature:

Said the master to the youth:
"We have come in search of truth,
Trying with uncertain key
Door by door of mystery;

We are searching through His laws,
To the garment-hem of cause,
Him, the endless, unbegun,
The unnameable, the One,
Light of all our light the source,
Life of life and Force of force.

By past efforts unavailing
Doubt and error, loss and failing,
Of our weakness made aware,
On the threshold of our task
Let us light and guidance ask,
Let us pause in silent prayer!"

Then the master in his place
Bowed his head a little space,
And the leaves, by soft air stirred,
Lapse of wave and cry of bird,
Left the solemn hush unbroken
Of that wordless prayer unspoken,
While its wish, on earth unsaid,
Rose to heaven interpreted.

Thus it appears that whether we study the progress of mankind from the point of view of science or that of religion, we find it a study of providence and prayer.

5. THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL GOAL OF ALL HUMAN PROGRESS

Whatever may be the truth which science teaches us concerning the movement of nature onward and upward from the lower to the higher, from the physical to the spiritual, that which Christian faith is most certain about is that the origin and the end of the long process are both found in the realm of the spiritual; the originating cause is the Divine Spirit, while the culmination and goal of the evolving order is personal human spirit. "Evolution will not have reached its goal," says Dr. Newman Smyth, "until whatever spiritual capacity and intent were involved in nature when the Spirit brooded over chaos shall have been brought to complete fulfillment.

The intermediate state may be natural history, but the beginning and the end of the creation are spiritual."

Science and religion are not opposing forces and pathways that cross each other. They rather run parallel, on the right hand and the left of the pilgrim's pathway, moving, both, toward God.

"Conflict between science and religion," says Dr. D. M. Edwards, Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and of Systematic Theology in the Congregational Theological College at Brecon, Wales, "is only possible, either when religion abandons its own proper domain and seeks to give a *scientific* or factual explanation of the world, or when science leaves its own special territory and turns its own limited viewpoint into a materialistic or naturalistic *philosophy* of reality as a whole. . . . Science has made enormous contributions to human life which religion can ignore only at its peril. Religion can and ought to assimilate the new scientific knowledge and modify its theology accordingly where necessary. Experience is ultimately one and indivisible, and knowledge is one organic whole. The interactions of science and religion are therefore bound to be intimate. They cannot be kept apart as it were in air-tight compartments. Religion must gratefully recognize that science is making contributions of immense value to our right understanding of God and of the increasing purpose that is revealed in the cosmic process. . . . The evolution of religion is largely the process by which prayer is gradually extricated from the magical spell, a process which is never wholly complete, but which has ever advanced, *pari passu*, with the development of man's ethical and rational consciousness. The other line of progress lies in the gradual spiritualizing of prayer as to its objects or content. In the primitive period prayer can be nothing

more than a petition for material blessings. This finds its place in the higher religions, too, and is represented in the Lord's Prayer in the clause 'Give us this day our daily bread.' According to E. B. Tylor, we never find among the lower cultures prayers of native origin which ask for moral good, such as forgiveness or help to live good lives. But there is a gradual reaching forth of human aspiration toward moral and spiritual blessings, and a movement of the spirit beyond the level of petition for special blessings to that of submission to the Divine will and of fellowship with God. There is an increasing emphasis on purity of heart and on concentration of thought and purpose as essential conditions of true prayer."¹

Let science and religion, then, keep together, as they each and both make progress, for the God of physical nature and the God of human nature are not two Gods, but one—the one God of providence.

It is now nearly three quarters of a century since the publication of the epoch-making book titled "The Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection" awakened the scientific world to a new life while it threw the religious world into what may well be termed a panic. The theory of evolution became a "storm center" of scientific and theological controversy. And then things quieted down, some saying it was because the new theory had been discredited, while others felt that it was because freedom of thought had won the day. Recently, much to the surprise and regret alike of devout scientists and of progressive theologians, that storm cloud has returned, charged with disturbing electric forces which many had thought were dissipated and gone. Again now, as often in the past, we are seeing the oft-quoted words of the prophet

¹"Philosophy of Religion," p. 121.

Isaiah fulfilled, "He that believeth will not make haste," which words, being interpreted for us, mean: He that really and profoundly believes in God and his providential government of the world is in no way disturbed and upset in his faith, being assured that "God is in his heaven and all's right with the world." At no time during the past two thousand years has Christianity made such rapid, steady, and assured progress as during the past half century while this dreaded and ominous storm-cloud has been lowering in our scientific and religious skies.

Since the word "evolution," however, as the late Dr. A. V. G. Allen truly observed, may carry ideas which are true of the order of outward nature, but which do not apply to the spiritual world, it would be better to use the word "development" as standing for the law of progress in humanity. In the light of ever-growing truth, whatever is irrational, or superstitious, or false, is doomed to fade away and disappear. To demonstrate progress at every stage of the movement of history is, of course, impossible; but, undoubtedly, when we take the long survey of the centuries, the advancement is clear and unmistakable.¹

Sixty-five years ago, when the controversy over evolution was producing its first great disturbance, the famous occupant of Plymouth pulpit in Brooklyn uttered, in the following calm and confident words, his faith in providence and human progress and in the divine goal in which they are both to find their consummation:

In inorganic and material nature there is an impulse, whatever it may be, by which things unfold and work steadily toward higher excellence. It is accompanied, indeed, with immense waste; it is circuitous, slow, with something of retroaction; but the unfolding of nature by this mute and latent tendency to go on to a better future leavens the world like yeast, and develops it as well. This is the spirit of the ages, the genius of the universe. All creation is on the march. The stars are

¹See "Religious Progress," pp. 46-53.

revolving. The dead crust of the earth feels and responds to the necessity of moving. The whole vegetable kingdom is moving onward and upward. The animal kingdom, also, keeps step, unconscious of the impelling cause. Man, as if he heard the music drowsily and afar off, joins the strange procession, and struggles on and upward also. It is a strange march of creation, moving to unheard music, with unseen banners, to some great enterprise, to some Divine goal. When and where it shall finally encamp and hang out the banners of victory is known only to Him who liveth in eternity, with whom a thousand years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years.

Henry George concludes his little volume titled "The Law of Human Progress" with the following glowing words, which, whatever may be thought of his economic and social theories, cannot fail to make a powerful appeal not only to the imagination, but to the hope of every Christian believer whose faith is characterized by that optimism that belongs to the sons of God:

If now, while there is yet time, we turn to justice and obey her; if we trust Liberty and follow her, the dangers that now threaten must disappear, and the forces that now menace will turn to beneficent agencies of elevation and progress with want destroyed; with greed changed to noble passions; with the fraternity that is born of equality taking the place of the jealousy and fear that now array men against each other; with mental power loosed by conditions that give to the humblest comfort and leisure—given these things, and who shall measure the heights to which our civilization may soar? Words fail the thought! It is the golden age of which poets have sung and high-raised seers have told in metaphor! It is the vision glorious which has always haunted man with gleams of fitful splendor. It is what he saw whose eyes at Patmos were closed in a trance. It is the culmination of Christianity—the City of God on earth, with its walls of jasper and its gates of pearl! It is the reign of the Prince of Peace!

Subtlest thought shall fail and learning falter,
Churches change, forms perish, systems go,
But our human needs, they will not alter,
Christ no after age shall e'er outgrow.

Yea, Amen. O changeless One, Thou only
Art life's guide and spiritual goal,
Thou the Light across the dark vale lonely—
Thou the eternal haven of the soul.¹

¹Principal J. C. Shairp.

6. PROVIDENCE, PROGRESS AND IMMORTALITY

Do Divine providence and human progress stop at death? Surely not. Certain phases of progress cease at death, but intellectual and spiritual progress will go on forever.

There is a sense in which a revelation *from* God might be conceived of as so complete and perfect as to be final and subject to no change and progress. But our religion, while it contains revelations *from* God, is a revelation *of* God, and as such it is now and always has been progressive, becoming clearer, fuller, more and more complete as time has gone on—and this progress will, indeed, continue in the life to come. God, the infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, the source and center and life-giver and ruler of the universe—shall a man whose days are as grass rise up and say that he has thoughts about God and has given verbal expression to those thoughts so complete and perfect that they will not change and cannot be improved? Should not his prayer rather be that the thought of God, the meaning of God, the glory of God, the providential plans and purposes of God may grow and expand and progress in men's comprehension of him until they who now see in a mirror darkly, may have the vision and knowledge of those who see face to face? The progressiveness of human personality is not simply its response to a progressive age, but something that springs from its own inherent vitality. He who believes in the living God, while he will be far from calling all change progress, and while he will, according to his judgment, withstand perverse and hurtful changes with all his might, will also regard the cessation of change as the greatest calamity that could befall religion. Stagnation in thought or experience would mean death for Christian life as surely as it does for any

other vital movement. It is because Christianity can change and does change, ever adapting itself to the world's deep needs, that it not only lives but grows with the promise and potency of endless progress, and prepares men not only for life but for life eternal.¹

We claim, therefore, with well-grounded confidence that human progress as related to Divine providence is not limited to this life. If man is eternal, his progress will go on forever. We do not comprehend, says Dr. D. W. Faunce,² but we do apprehend, at once the finiteness of ourselves and the infiniteness of God. We can look about us and see that we have boundless relations to our fellow men; look above us and see that we have boundless relations to God, and look within us and become conscious that we have a moral and spiritual life which, for its completion, must, as Thomas Carlyle says, "take hold of the eternities." We are thus capable of identifying ourselves with infinite interests, of attaching ourselves in our fortunes for time and eternity to the interests and far-reaching purposes and plans of God. And the ideal of all right and all attainment lifts itself higher and higher as we go on. The ideal progresses as we make progress, and this shows the capacity of man as a being who has been made in the image of God, and who is ever to be advancing in the direction of God. Capacity for moral action in man means capacity for immortality; for there can never come in a free moral being a time when a "to-morrow" will not be needed in which to experience and realize the results of "to-day."

Moral personality, thus interpreted, demands immortality for its self-realization. Moral action works in

¹See Harry E. Fosdick's "Christianity and Progress," Chapter IV.

²See "Shall We Believe in Divine Providence" (p. 60), on the thought and language of which we have here freely drawn.

a sphere, as it were, of illimitable relations; there is a certain boundlessness in it. Nothing short of the "infinitude beyond" is a large enough sphere for the existence of a being possessed of a moral and spiritual nature and made in the image of God. Surely if there is a Divine providence anywhere vouchsafed to any creature in the universe, it must find its noblest sphere of exercise and its highest expression in guiding and governing that creature whom "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" hath made, as the author of the Book of Wisdom declares, "in the image of his own eternity." He that believeth in God, Christ tells us, hath—not merely will have hereafter, but *hath* here and now—"eternal life."

The divine-human copartnership into which God and man enter at the beginning of what we call a providentially guided and divinely governed human life is not a temporary arrangement merely; it is an eternal covenant. It is because God has put eternity in the heart of man and immortality in the undying aspirations of his soul that he has made his life to be eternal. But to a rational and moral being eternal life can prove to be a blessing only in proportion as it is continuously enlarged and enriched by unending progress in all that pertains to his intellectual and spiritual nature.

PART TWO
HUMAN PRAYER

CHAPTER NINE
THE MATTER AND MEANING OF PRAYER

If there is any one duty within the whole range of revelation more explicitly adverted to, more positively enjoined, more frequently practiced, and to the performance of which more promises are annexed in the Scriptures than any other, it is that of prayer.—*Preface to Treffry's "Treatise on Prayer."*

By prayer I mean not an empty utterance of words, not the repetition of certain sacred formulas, but the movement of the soul putting itself into personal relation and contact with the mysterious Power whose presence it feels even before it is able to give it a name. Where this inward prayer is wanting there is no religion; on the other hand, wherever this prayer springs up in the soul and moves it, even in the absence of all form and doctrine clearly defined, there is true religion, living piety. From this point of view, perhaps a history of prayer would be the best history of the religious development of mankind. That history would be seen to commence in the crudest cry for help and to complete itself in perfect prayer which, on the lips of Christ, is simply submission to and confidence in the Father's will.—*Auguste Sabatier.*

More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

—*Tennyson.*

IX

THE MATTER AND MEANING OF PRAYER

"AFTER this manner pray ye," said our Lord when the disciples besought him to teach them how to pray. But his words concerning prayer, uttered on many different occasions, teach us far more concerning the matter of prayer than concerning the "manner," as these two words are used in modern speech. In no way can we better learn and show what manner of men we are than by learning and practicing what Christ taught his disciples concerning the manner and matter of prayer.

"Ask, and ye shall receive." "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "All things are possible to him that believeth."

These words of the Master almost startle us with the power they seem to place in prayer. They seem to place the very omnipotence of Deity at the call of the believer. Nor can we, even with our deepest desires and our largest askings, exhaust that omnipotence, for we are assured that He to whom we pray "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Words so weighty and momentous need to be rightly interpreted, that they may lead, and not mislead, the believer in the use of this greatest of all privileges and in the use of this mighty power which God has committed to him.

To set forth clearly and adequately the true Christian doctrine of prayer, with its dominant emphasis on moral and spiritual objects, it is necessary that we present some of the inadequate, misleading, and erroneous conceptions of prayer that have long characterized both the faith and the practice of professing Christians. Dr. Hastings begins his discussion of the nature of prayer with the following:

The lowest and crudest notion concerning prayer is that it consists in asking God for things, and its value consists in getting the things for which we ask. This is the notion with which childhood always begins, and the only one which childhood can entertain. This notion is also prominent in popular religious thought, and underlies much of what is said concerning answers to prayer. This view is very superficial and is the parent of much skepticism respecting prayer. It is no uncommon thing to find young persons skeptical with respect to prayer because they have failed to get the things for which they have prayed; and often the faith of older persons breaks down from the same cause. In the stress of some trial they have faithfully prayed, and no answer has come. Friends or relatives have died, or their own health has failed, or their way has been hedged up; and all the while Heaven has seemed deaf to their cries and entreaties as the ear of the dead, and they have been left to sorrow and uncertainty and bereavement and manifold distress. Such cases abound; and, if we would escape the painful doubts arising thence, we must revise and deepen our conception of prayer and its relation to the religious life. Plainly, the view of prayer simply as a talisman or as a means of getting things is inadequate to experience.¹

1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF PRAYER?

We have been taught from our childhood up, and not unwisely, that "prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, and by the help of his Spirit, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." The Christian doctrine of prayer as thus defined not only

¹"The Christian Doctrine of Prayer," p. 21. This large and encyclopædic volume on prayer is one with which every student of the great doctrines of the Christian Religion should make himself familiar.

implies and recognizes the dependence of the creature upon his Creator, but teaches that the Creator conditions what he does for his creatures, within certain definite and well-defined limits, upon their prayers. We say "within certain limits," for, as a matter of fact, much of what God does for his creatures is not conditioned on their prayers. Multitudes do not pray at all, and yet they are the constant recipients from God's hands of innumerable blessings which come to them no less than to those who do pray. The Bible distinctly teaches that the Heavenly Father makes his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and unjust alike. The general providence of God is alike to all regardless of their moral character. The laws of nature make no discrimination in favor of the good over the bad. But within this widespread and all-embracing general providence there is, as we have endeavored to show in a previous chapter, a special providence that pertains to none but God-fearing, truth-seeking, duty-loving souls, and its blessings can be enjoyed only by those who have willing and obedient wills, those who are ever seeking to know and do the will of the Father in heaven. Surely those who are thus related to God may live in the abiding assurance that the ears of God are ever open to their prayers, and there are blessings without number, mainly moral and spiritual blessings, that come to them which, in the nature of the case, cannot be received and enjoyed by those in whose lives prayer has no place and for whom it has no meaning.

Prayer means, then, first of all, a sincere and heartfelt desire for a thing based upon a real sense of need; and this desire may be uttered in speech or unexpressed in audible words. The most proper and Scriptural form of words that could possibly be devised which do not ex-

press the real and heartfelt desires of those who use them, cannot constitute true and genuine prayer. This is the chief objection to written and ritualistic prayers, whether for private or public devotion, many of which far surpass, in the elegance and scripturalness of the language used, the majority of extempore prayers. But if they prove to any worshipers truly expressive of their own needs and desires, they are none the less true prayers because written by others. The Lord's Prayer, by its perfection and its adaptation to all worshipers, rebukes those who unwisely decry all written and ritualistic prayers.

The Heavenly Father looks beneath the surface of his children's prayers, distinguishing and separating their real needs from the superficial and ephemeral wants for which they childishly clamor, withholding entirely oftentimes the latter, and giving them instead that which supplies their real needs. They are foolish parents who give their children whatever they clamor for. The wise parent, having the higher ultimate good of his child in view, is often under the necessity of disappointing and grieving his child by withholding many things which he desires and asks for. How much more is the Heavenly Father's love for his child guided by wisdom! And not only must things desired and demanded by the impatient and petulant child be withheld oftentimes, but there are times and instances calling for discipline when "to spare the rod will spoil the child." A parent has often to wait many years before there is loving and joyful acquiescence in his commandments on the part of his child, wait until his laws get into the heart of his grown-up child. It indicates growth and advanced attainments in the Christian life for a child of God to say: "I delight to do thy will, O Father." Having learned by ex-

perience that the will of the Father is wisest and best, he then prays,

“The good, unasked, O Father, grant;
The ill, though asked, deny.”

If prayer means, first of all, the expression of sincere and heartfelt desires of the creature to his Creator, it means also and no less filial communion between a child and his Heavenly Father, between the finite and the Infinite Spirit. It is in and through friendly and loving communion alone that the desires of the heart find free and happy expression. The more God is thought of in terms of Fatherhood and Love, the more essential does the idea of communion become when we seek to interpret the meaning of prayer.

The Catechism of the Free Churches of England and Wales defines prayer thus: “In prayer we commune with our Father in heaven, confess our sins, give him thanks for all his benefits, and ask in the name of Jesus for such things as he has promised.” “By thus defining prayer as communion,” says Dr. M. P. Talling, “attention is drawn to one phase of prayer that is always implied, but often forgotten—namely, that communion is a mutual act, a receiving as well as an imparting experience. In it we not only commune with God, but God also communes with us. The mercy seat is not so much a place of petition for *things* as a tryst for intercommunion. Thither we go to speak to the King, and there we should wait to hear his voice. We do not practice listening to God as much as we do talking to him. The receptive part of communion is the part least practiced, but the part most needed, because it is in the receptive act that faith is exercised, appropriating God’s manifold benefits, wisdom, grace, and power.”

Few wiser and truer words have been written on

prayer as communion than these, found in a recent volume by a distinguished English theologian:

In the personal relation between God and man there must be communication; love that never spoke or heard would soon languish. This communion will find spontaneous expression in prayer. Prayer must not be thought of primarily as petition, as asking God to give what we want. It must begin in gratitude for all God is and does; it must end in submission to the will of God as alone good. . . . We must not say that prayer should be confined to spiritual blessings only, for our spiritual life is affected by our cares and desires regarding earthly goods, regarding the health and happiness of our loved ones, and God is in his providence caring for all his creatures in nature as well as history. But all petitions must always be offered not merely in passive resignation, but in active coöperation with God's will. Then prayer itself becomes a winnowing of the chaff from the wheat of our desires, and in prayer we learn what to pray for and to give up the wishes which we cannot consistently offer to God in prayer. While childlike prayer must not be childish, just as an earthly parent trains the child not to be childish, God is, in the communion of his children, training them for spiritual maturity, when their petitions will be assured of an answer, because, by the enlightening of his Spirit, they are more and more conformed to his holy and blessed will.¹

The intensive and extensive power of Christian prayer in developing and enlarging the spirit of love and fellowship, the power of communion with God to create a desire to commune with one's fellow men, has rarely been set forth more clearly than in the following paragraph:

From the point of view of worship every man is seen in his relation to a God of inexhaustible resources whose name is Love; and hence to Christianity is given the task of realizing the community of Love. This social fruitage is a necessary outcome even of the most individual acts of worship when they are truly understood. A genuine relation of one soul to God must generate a relation of that soul to all of God's children in all their interests. Experience shows that when individuals come together and become a worshiping community, new spiritual levels are reached, new values created, new powers released. Social worship adds new depth and meaning to the experience of God.

¹A. E. Garvie, "The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead," p. 416.

Through social worship love is made more sacred, the feeling of unity with our fellow creatures becomes more vivid and binding, and the fact that God is the God of all is more adequately expressed than through any private worship. Hence he who seeks to be religious apart from the worshipping congregation of the Church is surrendering more than he can well afford to lose. The wellspring of social unity and spiritual love in the mystical worship of the God of love should never be forgotten. Religious worship, alone of all the forces known to man, is able to perform that miracle of pity and of hope which enables him who has seen God to see, not his fellow worshipers only, but all mankind, as a potential Community of Love. The presence of such a feeling toward the human race is almost universally regarded as a token of the presence and work of God in the life of man.¹

Not less to the point in setting forth the broadening influence of truly Christian prayer is a paragraph found in "The Place of Prayer in the Christian Religion." "In the Old Testament," says Dr. James M. Campbell, "God is represented as Creator, and the fundamental thing in prayer is creature dependence; in the New Testament God is represented as Father and the fundamental thing in prayer is filial confidence. In giving to his disciples their first lesson in prayer, Jesus said: 'When ye pray, say, Our Father.' He thus freed the praying soul from every vestige of narrowness and gave men a new conception of the scope of prayer as embracing all sorts and conditions of men. He also said, 'No one cometh unto the Father but by me'; but wherever two or three should gather together in his name, there would he be found in the midst of the worshipers. The man who does not pray in the catholic spirit befitting the Divine name, 'Our Father,' who does not pray for all sorts and conditions of men, is praying not Christian, but only pre-Christian or pagan prayer. Such prayer is keyed too low, and in its spirit and scope falls below the Christian standard."²

¹Brightman, "Religious Values." Condensed from Chapter IX.

²"The Place of Prayer in the Christian Religion."

2. PRAYER AS RELATED TO THE WILL OF GOD AND MAN

But why, it may be inquired, is it necessary to ask God to do things "according to his will"? Why does he not accomplish his will without any asking on our part? Why has he conditioned anything upon the will of the creature? Why does he not do what is best for all, whether they pray to him or not? How can he, if he be infinitely good, do otherwise than what is best for all, even though they do not pray at all? These questions are often asked, and need to be answered, and none the less because they indicate a confusion of ideas with regard to the moral government of God and the place of prayer in his moral system. We might, perhaps, best answer these questions by asking and answering another which in principle involves them all: If God would have all men to be saved, why does he not, seeing that he is omnipotent, save all by the simple exercise of his own power? We answer that such a method of making men good and saving them by the exercise of infinite and arbitrary power would entirely change the nature of God's moral government and involve the transformation of moral free agents into machines, or personal puppets. Much, perhaps most, of what God does is entirely independent of the will of the creature; but unless he has conditioned some things upon the will of his creatures, there can be no room for free agency on their part. The greater, now, includes the less; the larger question, involving the fact that God has conditioned the greatest of all blessings—namely, man's personal salvation—upon his free will, of course, includes within itself the principle involved in all these lesser questions with regard to why God has conditioned the granting of specific blessings and favors on the prayers of his creatures.

It is because both the Divine and human wills are involved that prayer has the promise of being answered only when it is for things which accord with the will of God. "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." Christ not only prepared for us the model prayer, with "Thy will be done" in the foreground, but he set us an example by offering himself the ideal prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," must be the refrain of every true prayer; we may pray for what we will if this "nevertheless" be always present, felt at least, if not uttered in words. We do not know what is best for us. God alone knows that; and what a comfort to feel, when we make our requests known unto God, that if it is not best for us he will not grant it. Indeed, the real answer to prayers for things which are not best for us is to send not what we ask but what He wills who alone knows what is best for us. If many passages of Scripture seem to teach that the answer to our prayers is conditioned only upon our faith in asking, it is also true that no one who desires that which is not according to the will of God can exercise the true and perfect faith which can alone claim absolutely and literally an answer to its prayers. No greater harm could, perhaps, come to the weak and short-sighted children of God than for the Heavenly Father to send them literally and absolutely what they pray for, regardless of whether it is best for them or not.

"Genuine prayer is much more than asking," says Dr. S. H. Mellone. "It is the expression of a spiritual activity—a man's identification of himself with a desire, and an offering of the desire to God in the consciousness

of what God is. It implies, therefore, a change in man, a change which fits him to receive benefits which otherwise would not be granted to him. A personal good is relative to the person on whom it is to be conferred. What is good for him in one condition of mind and will, as when the soul is turned to God in prayer, may not be good for him in another condition, as when the soul is turned away from God."

In his volume titled "What and Why Is Man?" Dr. R. L. Swain has some pertinent thoughts on the phase of prayer that we are now considering which we do well to quote:

Nothing we can do ever changes God either from the right or to the right, because his will always sides with the very best thing to do under the existing circumstances. The right thing to do for a child, however, depends upon the conduct and mental attitude of the child. In goodness God is the changeless Father, we are the vacillating children. God's constant good will compels him to suit his actions to our variations. As certain, therefore, as God is good and wise, we determine his specific acts toward us by our conduct in each new situation. In a deep sense every life, good or bad, is a prayer; it has many surface desires, but underneath them all is the real organizing and controlling desire. This deepest desire expressed in deeds, if not in words, is the soul's real prayer. With this deepest desire, the real prayer that we are praying, our spoken petitions may not be at all in harmony. Prayer is not Christian until every desire of the heart is brought before God for his approval or disapproval. Our Father regards our deepest desire and disregards the vagrant wishes and petitions that we present to him. It is when the soul stands before its Maker, making a solemn engagement to surrender every desire to his will, that it is blessed beyond its heart's desire, whether the particular request of the moment is granted or denied. Prayer on this basis opens to God a chance to do for us that which he could never do if we did not come to him with the honest surrender of our whole hearts. Nothing could be more stupid and wrong than for God to treat us in the same way regardless of the real attitude of our lives toward him and toward our own highest good and that of our fellow men.

There can be no such thing as personal religion without prayer, and prayer has no real significance unless

God has conditioned the doing of certain things on his part upon the creature's prayers, conduct, and character; and in the Christian system, conduct and character are never to be separated from prayer. If it were a matter simply of power, God could and would make all men good and keep them good, and would do for all what is best; indeed, would never have suffered either moral or physical evil to enter the universe. But it is not a question simply of divine power, it is a moral question involving the formation and transformation and development of the character of moral free agents. In this system, prayer has a necessary place.

As a matter of fact, God does what is best for sinners, but it is not best that sinners should be saved by the arbitrary power of God independent of their wills; it is not best that God should save and bless impenitent and incorrigible sinners just as he saves and blesses penitent and believing Christians who are perpetually striving both to know and to do his will. If God made no difference whatever between the pious and the wicked, between the man who prays and him who prays not, between the man who does his will and him who does it not, there would be no premium whatever on piety, and the very foundations both of religion and of moral free agency and character would be destroyed. Ours is a world for making men, not for manipulating machines; for developing personality, not for exhibiting puppets. To make some things Divine power alone is needed. But to make a man two things are needed—the Divine will and the human will. Each is and must be free; but it is not until God and man “will” together and work together that a real and true man can be made. It is in the act of prayer that the Divine will and the human will

come together in a happy harmony that makes the two wills, as it were, but one will.

These thoughts find strong reënforcement in the following words taken from Dr. Harry E. Fosdick's volume titled "The Meaning of Prayer":

When anyone believes in the whole of God, and is sure that he has a wise and a good purpose for every child of his and for all the world, prayer inevitably becomes not the endeavor to get God to do our will, but the endeavor to open our lives to God so that *God can do in us what he wants to do*.

The fallacy underlying the thought that the wisdom and love of God make praying superfluous is the idea that God can do all he wills without any help from us. But he cannot. *The experience of the race is clear that some things God never can do until he finds a man who prays*. Indeed, Meister Eckhart, the mystic, puts the truth with extreme boldness: "God can as little do without us, as we without him." If at first this seems a wild statement, we may well consider in how many ways God's will depends on man's coöperation. God himself cannot do some things unless men *think*. He never blazons his truth on the sky that men may find it without seeking. Only when men gird the loins of their minds and undiscourageably give themselves to intellectual toil will God reveal to them the truth, even about the physical world. And God himself cannot do some things unless men *work*. Will a man say that when God wants bridges and tunnels, wants the lightnings harnessed and cathedrals built, he will do the work himself? That is an absurd and idle fatalism. God stores the hills with marble, but he never built a Parthenon; he fills the mountains with ore, but he never made a needle or a locomotive. Only when *men* work can some things be done. Now if God has left some things contingent on man's *thinking* and *working*, may he not have left some things contingent on man's *praying*? The testimony of the great souls is a clear affirmative to this: some things never without thinking; some things never without working; some things never without praying! *Prayer is one of the three forms of man's coöperation with God*. (Page 64.)

Prayer is no substitute for action. The answer to it generally comes when man himself coöperates with God in bringing it to pass. We are not warranted in asking God to do anything for us that we can do for ourselves; but we are warranted in asking for help to do our own work efficiently. "I turn my camel loose and commit

him to God," said a follower of Mohammed once to the Arabian prophet. "Not so," replied Mohammed, "you should first tie up your camel and then commit him to God." The frequent conjunction of watchfulness and prayer found in the New Testament implies that one who prays to be delivered from temptation must himself shun the temptation from which he prays to be delivered.

Not only is coöperation between God and man necessary, if prayer is to be effective, but many other persons and things enter into the answer to our prayers. To consider how largely this is true, and how dependent we are not only upon ourselves and God but upon multitudes of our fellow men for the many things that enter into life and are necessary to make life worth living, should not only make our prayers intercessory far beyond the circle of our immediate friends and loved ones, but create within us a catholicity and breadth of love and gratitude that should know no bounds. "It is significant," says Bertha Condé, "how large a number of the social group enter into the answer of our prayers. The loaf of bread involves the baker, the coal workers, the millers, the farmers, and the workers in transportation; also the labor for the means to buy the food. A large group unites its efforts for the blessing of each individual. And God back of it all brings life to the seed and increase to the harvest and moves upon the hearts of men to work together with him. Stolid indeed must be the heart that eats without giving thanks for the food which is life to the blood."

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
Back of the flour is the mill,
Back of the mill is the earth and the shower
And the sun and the Father's will."

3. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PRAYER

In prayer the whole spiritual man is active; it involves thought, feeling, and volition; the mind, the heart, and the will are all in exercise in true Christian prayer. There may be words and sentences and sounds strung together that fall short of this requirement which yet pass for prayer; but they are not prayer as Christianity defines this act of worship. It is a mere "lip service" unless head and heart and will are all exercised. It may be, and is, a debated question as to which comes first in prayer—for example, whether thought or feeling takes precedence—but certain it is that not until the intellect, the emotions, and the will all find expression in this spiritual exercise can prayer be considered complete.

No writer on prayer has brought this truth out more clearly than Canon H. P. Liddon, of England. He says:

The three ingredients of prayer—emotion, intellect, will—are also ingredients in all real work, whether of the brains or of the hands. The sustained effort of the intelligence and of the will must be seconded in work no less than in prayer by a movement of the affections if work is to be really successful. A man must love his work to do it well. The difference between prayer and ordinary work is that in prayer the three ingredients are more equally balanced. Study may in time become intellectual habit, which scarcely demands any effort of will: handiwork may in time become so mechanical as to require little or no guidance from thought; each may exist in a considerable, although not in the highest, degree of excellence, without any coöperation of the affections. Not so prayer. It is always the joint act of the will and the understanding, impelled by the affections; and when either will or intelligence is wanting, prayer at once ceases to be itself by degenerating into a barren intellectual exercise, or into a mechanical and unspiritual routine.¹

Professor William James sets forth in his "Psychology" what he regards as the real reason why prayer is well-nigh universal among men. "We hear," he says, "in

¹Robert F. Horton says: "There are twelve parts to prayer: meditation, aspiration, adoration, recollection, thanksgiving, praise, contrition, confession, faith, supplication, petition, and intercession."

these days of scientific enlightenment, a great deal of discussion about the efficacy of prayer; and many reasons are given us why we should not pray. But in all this very little is said of the reason why we do pray, which is simply that we cannot help praying. It seems probable that, in spite of all that science may do to the contrary, men will continue to pray to the end of time, unless their mental nature changes in a manner which nothing we know should lead us to expect."

(1) *Prayer an Expression of Feeling*

Most of those who undertake to analyze prayer with respect to its psychological elements consider it, first of all, an impulse of the heart, an act expressing the feeling of need and the sense of dependence. Let us consider first, then, the relation of prayer to feeling.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." This is true whether that which is spoken is addressed to God or to man. Only petitions that are preceded and prompted by love can claim a hearing and an answer. We are invited and encouraged in Holy Writ to "pour out our hearts before Him" whose ears are always open to the prayers of his children. When the Psalmist prays God to cleanse the thoughts of his heart by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is that he may more perfectly love and serve his Maker. Possibly there is no way in which we can show how love prompts prayer, and how prayer expresses and increases love, better than by comparing the eighteenth and the one hundred and sixteenth Psalms. In the former love leads to prayer; in the latter prayer expresses and increases love. In the former the worshiper says, "I will love thee," and this prompts and is followed by the ensuing words, "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised." In

the latter he says: "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication." In commenting on these words one of the fathers observes that "he loved as he went in to the house of prayer, but he loved still more when he came out."

It is impossible for one to think of Christ's prayers or of his teachings concerning prayer without coupling them with love. And this is one reason why Christians find it impossible to think of prayer without thinking of the Divine Being to whom it is addressed in terms of Fatherhood and Love. The analogy between the relationship of an earthly parent to his child, carrying as it does along with it the unrestrained freedom of petition for things desired, and that of the Heavenly Father to his children on earth is nowhere more fitting, more reasonable, and more reassuring than when we are considering the place of prayer in human life. The very essence and heart of prayer considered in its sweetest aspect, that of communion, are found in the thought that we are children communing with a loving Father. "The prayer of a child to his father on earth," says Dr. James Hastings, "is precisely as reasonable or unreasonable as the prayer of a man to God. But who will own that such a prayer can lack the element of reason or right? Who will admit that, when he tries to prevail by his petition upon the heart of a kinsman or friend in whose love he confides, such an act is immoral or illogical? We know that human hearts are moved by prayer, and no argument will convince us that they are not. But from human hearts the ascent is natural to the Divine heart. For our Lord himself drew the parallel between Divine and human parentage, saying: 'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him

a serpent? . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"¹

(2) *The Relation of Prayer to the Intellect*

Let us assume, then, that prayer starts in the heart rather than in the head; that it is, in its first motions, more a matter of feeling and desire than of thinking and reasoning. But we are not told by the wise man of Proverbs that "as a man feeleth in his heart, so is he." On the contrary, the word of wisdom is, "As a man *thinketh* in his heart, so is he."

"I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also." So wrote Paul in one of his epistles, and in thus writing he warned his converts and all the followers of Christ against thoughtless prayers; warned against the teaching and practice of those who acted as if they thought religion consists solely in pious emotions, and whose prayers were often nothing more than vain babblings and meaningless, mystic utterances of sounds without sense. Sane, clear thinking is absolutely essential to healthful and edifying emotion in religion; and in no phase of religion is this truth more apparent and more in evidence than in the prayer life of men. Those who are most apt to be deceived as to the value of the religion they possess, who are most sure to appraise their religion at a higher value than either God or their fellow men can give it, are those who are swept and swayed by feelings and emotions which lack the ballast of calm and sober thought. From this class of religious people as a rule come those wild enthusiasts and fanatics who are not only characterized by devout ignorance, but who are

¹"The Christian Doctrine of Prayer," p. 233.

given to decrying all learning and find no place for reason in religion. Immovably intrenched in their opinions, prejudices, and passions, they are not open to reason, because it is impossible to reason out of men what was never reasoned into them.

Right thoughts about God, Christ, sin, holiness, salvation, are essential to all true and genuine prayer. If God condescends to hear and answer prayers that are characterized by misconceptions of some or, it may be, all of these cardinal facts and truths of the Christian religion—as, indeed, we may hope he does in many instances—it is due to his abounding mercy and pity, and not to his approval of such faulty prayers; due to the fact that the errors are those of the head and not of the heart.

While, then, the first impulse and inspiration to prayer may come from the realm of feeling and be the expression of desire, its proper guidance comes from the mind and is to be found in the understanding, illuminated by Divine grace. “Without this understanding, the spirit of prayer is like fluid metal which runs into irregular forms from want of a mold. Without the understanding the devotional impulse will easily pass into boisterous and even irreverent rhapsody or shrink back to the lifeless monotony of mere form. The understanding takes the devotional impulse or spirit in hand, rouses it to jealous and vigorous consciousness, bids it consider who He is who is the real Object of prayer, what is sought of him, why he is applied to for this particular benefit, and what are the fitting steps in the application.”¹

The apostle Paul gives divinely inspired instruction to Christian disciples when he bids them “grow in the grace and in the knowledge” of Christ and all divine

¹Hastings, “The Christian Doctrine of Prayer,” p. 13.

things. No growth in grace can be normal and healthful that does not, *pari passu*, with the distinctly spiritual experiences of the soul, advance also in knowledge, such knowledge as the mind alone can supply. He that has an experimental knowledge of Christ and things spiritual combines in that experience both the "grace" and the intellectual knowledge. In one of Canon H. P. Liddon's sermons on "Some Words of St. Paul," he says:

A man's religious life must keep pace with the growth of his knowledge and powers of reflection, or he will learn to think of it as a thing divided from all practical interests, as a mere reminiscence of his childhood; he will gradually drop if he does not deliberately reject it. A man's prayers must prompt and accompany his most deliberate actions; they must, if it may be, keep abreast of the entire range of his mental and moral effort. New subjects will constantly crowd for recognition; new forms of occupation, new friendships, new material for thought and speculation, new difficulties, anxieties, trials; new hopes and fears; the varying fortunes of our families; the course of public events; the conduct of our rulers; the failures or triumphs of the Church; the constant departure—one after another—of those whom we have known and loved, to another world, and the sense, which each day that passes must deepen, that our own turn must come ere long—all this is material for prayer which is constantly accumulating.

In one of the "Lectures on Preaching," delivered by Bishop Phillips Brooks to the students of the Yale University Divinity School, are these wise words on the subject now under consideration: "A prayer," said he, "must have thought in it. The thought may overburden it so that its wings of devotion are fastened down to its sides and it cannot ascend. Then it is no prayer, only a meditation or a contemplation. But to take the thought out of a prayer does not insure its going up to God. It may be too light as well as too heavy to ascend. I saw once in a shop window in London a placard which simply announced 'Limp Prayers.' It described, I believe, a kind of Prayer Book in a certain sort of binding which was for sale within; but it brought to mind many a

prayer to which one had listened, in which he could not join, out of which had been left the whole backbone of thought, and to which he could attach none of his own heart's desires."

(3) *The Relation of Prayer to the Human Will*

When all has been said, and said truly, concerning the primary place of feeling and thought in prayer, it still remains true that only in proportion as the volitions of the will accompany and follow the emotional and intellectual activities of the soul can anything be accomplished in and through prayer. In prayer, as in all other activities, it is the will that determines and decides things, and which, other necessary conditions being met, brings things to pass. In most prayers—such is the copartnership between God and man—the man who prays not only can but must, in part at least, answer his own prayers, and God conditions what he does in no small degree on what man does. What man does in praying, as in working, depends upon his own will.

It is the will that presents and presses the appeal and persists with an importunity in prayer that will take no denial, and nothing that marks and accompanies prayer has such promise of reward as the importunity which is an expression at once both of the deep sense of need and of the confidence of the worshiper in the power and goodness of God.

In one's wrestling with the Angel of the Covenant, as in the case of Jacob of old, it is the will which says: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." The sincerity of the worshiper's prayer is attested and manifested more in the will power back of it than in the groans and tears that may accompany it. Success in prayer depends most

largely upon the strength of the will. Weakness in will and power in prayer never go together.

"Whenever we turn to the teachings of Jesus," said Professor Peabody of Harvard University in one of his college chapel talks, "we observe an extraordinary emphasis on the third element of consciousness, the will. However important it may be to have a creed that is sound or an emotion that is warm, the Christian life, according to the Gospels, is primarily determined by the direction of the will, the fixing of the desire, the habit of obedience, the faculty of decision. When a modern psychologist says that 'the willing department of life dominates both the thinking department and the feeling department,' he is in fact but repeating the great words: 'If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching.' Here is the aspect of the religious life which gives courage and hope to many a consciously imperfect experience. You are not sure about your creed? That is a pity. You do not respond to the emotion of the revivalist or the poet? That also is a loss. But, after all, the fundamental question concerns the discipline of your will. Are you determined in your purpose? Have you the will to do the will? Then, even with half a creed and less than half a pious ecstasy, you are at least in the line of the purpose of Jesus Christ and, as you will to do the will, may come some day to know the teaching. 'Obedience,' said Frederick Robertson, 'is the organ of spiritual knowledge.' First the discipline of the will, then the truth which lies beyond that ethical decision. Our thoughts may grow breathless as they climb; our emotions may ebb as they flow; but our wills may march steadily up the heights of life or flow steadily through the experiences of life as a river seeks the sea.

The profoundest modern statement of Christian faith is the confession of Tennyson:

'Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.'

It thus appears that in prayer, the mind and heart are active; the will is acquiescent. There is a difference between "saying prayers" and *praying*. Many people say their prayers with both mind and heart inactive, say their prayers while they are thinking of and consciously longing for other things far removed from the pious objects for which they are ostensibly praying. Such prayers are like the "machine prayers" of India—they just say themselves by rote. They count for nothing with God. Only as the mind and heart are active, and the will obediently passive, can those who pray claim to be offering up Christian prayers to God.

4. THE SUBJECTIVE INFLUENCE OF PRAYER

One very important aspect of prayer is its subjective influence and effect in bringing us into conformity with the will of God. But to affirm, as some do, that this is the only effect of prayer, that it may perchance change us, but does not change God, is to rob prayer of its highest dignity, its power with God. Those who maintain that prayer has subjective value and effect only frequently make use of the following illustration: "A man is in a boat in a river, but in his hand is a rope securely fastened to the shore which he wishes to gain; in pulling the shore to himself, he simply pulls himself to the shore; there is no change in the shore, it is immovable; he alone changes." This is a favorite illustration with those who teach that prayer is simply subjective in its influence and works no change whatever in God, whose laws are immutable and whose will, say

they, would not be perfect if it were conditioned upon the fickle and ever-changing will of man. The illustration is, we grant, a favorable one for a deistical view of the subject of prayer; but we do well to remember that illustrations do not prove anything—they may illustrate that which is erroneous as well as that which is true.

A noted skeptical philosopher once heard this illustration used in a sermon, and as he left the church he was heard to make the observation that if it be true that prayer has only subjective value, and men became convinced of that fact, they would cease to pray. And he was right—they would. Whatever tends to destroy faith in prayer as an agency which, when all conditions have been met, really prevails with God, tends inevitably not only to abolish all prayer, but to destroy the very foundations of religion; for prayer holds an absolutely essential place in religion. If God neither hears nor answers prayer, the worshiper might just as well address his prayers to the sun, moon, and stars, or to the clock on the mantelpiece, as to God. The subjective effect of the prayer, we may assume, would be the same in either case. The man whose faith in the objective efficacy of prayer is gone has no rope with which to pull himself up to the heavenly shores; his rope dissolves into a rope of sand, for his faith in the divine efficacy of prayer is the very strength of his plea.

That there is a subjective value to prayer, and that this value is very great in many instances, we have freely admitted; but, if any one could prove that this is the only effect and value of prayer, and convince the person praying of this fact, the conclusion is inevitable, it would be the end of prayer for that man, at least of prayer addressed to God; and prayer would then, if continued, be nothing more nor less than communing with one's own

soul. "The subjective value of prayer is chiefly due to the belief that prayer has values which are not subjective," says Prof. J. B. Pratt. "If the subjective value of prayer be all the value it has, we wise psychologists of religion had best keep the fact to ourselves, otherwise the game will soon be up, and we shall have no religion left to psychologize about. We shall have killed the goose that laid our golden egg."¹

In calling attention to and discrediting this erroneous view of the subjective influence and effect of prayer—that the only value prayer has is that it tends to lead the person praying to try to be and do that for which he prays—we must guard against going to the other extreme and unduly depreciating and minifying this aspect of prayer. The man who does not try to answer his own prayers by making, as far as he can, his own thoughts and feelings and volitions to be what he prays that God would make them, has no right to expect Divine help. The true answer to prayer does not consist in God's doing certain things for us without our coöperation, but rather in his supplementing and reënforcing us in what we are trying to do ourselves. There is, therefore, a true and good sense in which we recognize and affirm the beneficent subjective influence of a man's prayers upon himself. Only when this element is present can there be happiness in prayer.

"Cecil Rhodes hit upon a simple rationale of prayer," writes Canon Samuel McComb, "when he said to the Archbishop of Cape Town that 'prayer represents the daily expression to oneself of the right thing to do, and is a reminder to the human soul that it must direct the body on such lines.' Other things being equal, the praying man is more efficient—physically, mentally, and

¹"The Religious Consciousness," p. 336.

spiritually—than the nonpraying man. His mind works freely, unclouded by passion; his nervous power is not fretted by waste and worry. He is more potent in the battle of life. The vision of what it all means, its divine and eternal significance, endows him with new resolve to fling himself without reserve into the task committed to him, to suffer what must be endured, not as a blind stroke of Fate, but as an opportunity for the display of new and unsuspected capacity. . . . Prayer is the expression of man's inmost need, as a social being that is incomplete until he fulfills himself in Another. A praying man is a normal man, in right relations with his invisible environment; the man who seldom or never prays is abnormal, his energies are inhibited; he is living below the highest range of his possibilities."¹

5. PRAYER AS RELATED TO CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

We cannot emphasize too greatly the essential importance of character on the part of the person praying, if prayer is to prevail. For it is not "a fit of faith" that has power with God, but it is a consistent and uniform life of abiding faith, obedience, and devotion. "Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do those things which are pleasing in his sight." This passage of Scripture teaches us that power in prayer depends not upon temporary emotions and ecstatic experiences that come and go, but upon conduct and character, upon leading the Christly life and possessing the Christly character.

In a volume by L. Swetenham, titled "Conquering Prayer; or, The Power of Personality," are some words well worth quoting concerning the relation between char-

¹"The Power of Prayer."

acter and the effectuality or ineffectuality of prayer on the part of the person praying:

Not only is the quality and force of prayer affected by character, but the less character a man has the less effectively he prays, and the more character he has the more effectively he prays. If prayer is the putting forth by the personality, in some form or other, of its inherent force for the attainment of its desires and aims, it is very certain that the prayer must partake of the nature of the personality, of its excellences and its defects. The idea that it is possible for a dualism to exist between the personality that prays and the prayer it offers is an error that has too long survived. The easy-going notion that certain qualities can be exercised in prayer that do not exist in the character—that they can be summoned by magic, as it were, and introduced into a man's prayer when they have no existence in his ordinary life—is a fallacy that widely prevails and has many unconscious victims.

The fact is that character is the very basis of all prayer. As a man is, so he prays. He cannot be shallow and frivolous by nature and yet pray with depth and intensity; he cannot, with a torn and distracted personality, concentrate so as to generate force in prayer. All that is within him reacts on his praying, whether he will or no, vitally affecting every exercise of the spirit of prayer and deciding the issues. The qualities that give effectiveness to prayer cannot be suddenly called into being when required for the exercise of prayer if they have not their home already in the nature and are not already growing and developing there. The semblance of them we may conjure up, but not the reality; and God takes only realities into account; his great laws of cause and effect deal with facts, and not appearances. Therefore not until we really and inwardly fulfill the required conditions, need we look for the promised results. It is real, not nominal, fulfillment of these conditions that secures success in prayer.

If we look closely at these conditions themselves, we shall find that they are simply a demand for character. And in this fact there surely lurks a hint which sheds light on the problem as to why an all-powerful God and an all-loving Father, who knows our needs before we ask him, should require to be besieged with a persistence, faith, and intensity of no common order or degree ere he will respond. This very dependence of man upon his moral qualities for success in prayer is one of the surest, wisest means of procuring the growth and development of human character. Thus the law by which God limits himself in his prerogative as giver and benefactor becomes a powerfully regenerating factor in our lives.¹

¹"Conquering Prayer," pp. 24-28.

Nothing that Alexander Pope ever wrote has been altogether so much admired as those verses in which he attempted to voice "The Universal Prayer" of mankind. Some of his lines, like Tennyson's "Our wills are ours to make them thine," are often quoted by religious writers for their theological as well as poetic value. This poem unites providence and prayer as few poems have ever done.

Father of all! In every age,
In every clime adored
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou First great Cause, least understood,
Who all my sense confined
To know but this, that thou art good,
And that myself am blind!

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill;
And, binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This teach me more than hell to shun,
That more than heaven pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives;
To enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

This day be bread and peace my lot;
All else beneath the sun
Thou knowest if best bestowed or not,
And let thy will be done.

To thee, whose temple is all space—
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies—
One chorus let all beings raise!
All nature's incense rise!

We conclude this study of the matter and meaning of prayer, then, even as we begun it, by declaring that, if there is any one privilege and duty in the whole range of religion more explicitly set forth, more positively enjoined, more universally practiced, and to the performance of which more encouragements and promises are annexed in the Scriptures than to any other, it is the privilege and duty of prayer. We cannot, therefore, be very far wrong if we affirm that the most essential, significant, and revealing expression of religion, on its human side, is found in prayer.

CHAPTER TEN

THE PRAYERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

IN the New Testament prayer is, as we might expect, predominantly for things spiritual. Doubtless material things could not be altogether ignored or forgotten. Had not the Master himself taught his disciples to pray for bread, and had he not made upon them the impression that any request they made in his name would be answered? But requests by such men and in such a name would be overwhelmingly for things spiritual. Those whose ambition was to "abide in him" would not be sorely troubled by ambitions of a worldly kind. All requests were to be made in accordance with the Divine will, and as that will was the salvation of all men through the gospel of Jesus, many of the New Testament prayers are for the success of that gospel among those to whom it is preached, for boldness in proclaiming it, and for the further strengthening and stablishing of those who have already accepted it. Paul, like his Master, prayed that his converts should be preserved from all that was evil and perfected in all that was good, that they should be filled with the knowledge of the Divine will, and with the desire to do that will. In the early Church this spiritual note is the dominant one.—*J. E. McFadyen, in "The Prayers of the Bible."*

In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.—*St. Paul to the Philippians.*

X

THE PRAYERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

IT was not in the retirement of the closet, but out in the open, in communion with nature, that Christ oftenest communed with God in prayer. "Again and again," says Dr. J. Y. Simpson, "there comes in this undertone of communion with God in prayer amidst the solitude of nature, whether on mountain side, in a desert place, or in a garden. 'And in the morning, a great while before day, He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.' Even the wild village dogs never stirred as the Saviour of men passed firmly yet quietly down the street to pray for the sleeping world. Luke states very definitely that just before each of three great events in his life—the choosing of the Twelve, the great confession, and the Transfiguration—Jesus was praying. Indeed, before the first of them 'He went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God.' The Transfiguration is definitely connected with prayer by St. Luke: 'As he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered.' The repetition of the phrases almost looks like a formula, but such a formula could only have issued from what was a rule of life. On any view of the person of Jesus, the supreme and constant place that prayer had in his life is peculiarly noteworthy. And it is just here, in this recognition of the fundamental value of prayer as a means of correspondence and coöperation with the mind and the will of God, and of setting man in new and determining relations to God, that it is possible to test the truth of Jesus's method."¹

¹"Landmarks in the Struggle between Science and Religion," p. 261.

In previous chapters we have undertaken to show, from the precepts of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament concerning providence and prayer, that, while believers are justified in praying for purely temporal and material blessing, they are encouraged to pray mainly for spiritual blessings, and with confidence for temporal blessings only in so far as they may be related to ultimate spiritual ends. We desire now to examine the recorded prayers of the New Testament, to see if, along with other valuable lessons, they do not exemplify and confirm this view of prayer, of the emphasis in prayer being predominantly on moral and spiritual blessings.

1. THE LORD'S PRAYER

First in order of time and importance under this head comes the Lord's Prayer. The study of the prayers of the New Testament might not only begin but end with it. Although it is the briefest of formal prayers, so perfect and complete and suggestive is it in its contents that to interpret it adequately and state fully what it teaches would be to set forth well-nigh all truth that is absolutely essential to the Christian doctrine of prayer. However much we may pray, and howsoever many of the prayers of others we may study, we always come back to this short prayer as the model and standard of all Christian prayer. It is not only the "Lord's Prayer;" it is all men's prayer.

"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive

us our debts [sins] as we forgive our debtors.¹ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." (Luke 11: 1-4; Matt. 6: 9-13.)

We have already pointed out how the one brief petition for temporal blessings (daily bread) found here is embodied in and surrounded by petitions wholly spiritual. It is preceded by three and followed by three petitions for spiritual things. The evil, for deliverance from which we are instructed to pray, may be, in part, physical evil, though the revisers have limited it to spiritual evil by translating it "the evil one." Our Saviour had just come out of the hands of "the evil one" when he gave this prayer to his disciples. It will be remembered that Jesus was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil;" and we do not wonder, therefore, that he, realizing the terrors of that awful conflict, included in his universal prayer the petition, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Nothing in connection with the spiritual truth taught us in and through this model prayer is more significant than the fact that, after it is ended, our Lord returns to just one of the petitions contained in it. He seems to feel that this one truth about prayer needs to be emphasized and reënforced by further words, words of warning as to how one particular thing is absolutely incompatible with the spirit of prayer as offered by a disciple of the Christ. So close to the prayer itself and so very vital is this significant addendum concerning the absolute necessity of the spirit of forgiveness on the part of the person praying, that it may well be regarded by the student of

¹The Revised Version, translating this sentence more accurately, makes this condition of divine forgiveness more significant and exacting—"as we *have forgiven* our debtors."

Christian prayer as a part of the prayer itself: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

No one who, while repeating holy words of prayer on his lips, has unholy hate in his heart, can possibly offer effective and availing prayer. Hate for man and love for God cannot abide in the heart at one and the same time. Of all conditions of and qualifications for effective prayer, love is the most primary and fundamental, and this means love not only for God, but for one's fellow men. Commenting on this condition of successful prayer, a recent writer¹ says: "Brother Lawrence, that sweet-souled Catholic, was one who practiced the presence of God as it was rarely given to man to practice it. Phillips Brooks also, in another age and another environment, lived the God-conscious life. The science, the 'ology,' the technique of their methods differed, and yet the results were the same. Judged by their fruits they were brothers. Had they lived in the same age, in the same city, they would undoubtedly have found each other out, they would have been comrades in heart and in bringing the kingdom of heaven into the community where Providence had brought them together." And he who lives this life of prayer and love will never lack for the proofs of a Divine providence in and over his life. "The little child digs his well in the seashore sand," said Phillips Brooks, "and the great Atlantic, miles deep, miles wide, is stirred all through and through to fill it for him." "In the same way, in the presence of our human need, all the Divine forces in the universe are stirred through and through to fill it for us. Let us give ourselves up to such thoughts as this, knowing that around us are forces more fitted to

¹Glenn Clark, "The Soul's Sincere Desire," pp. 47, 60.

take care of us than we ourselves. Let go, and know that God reigns and we are in his hands." This prayer, addressed not to "my" but to "our" Father, tends to impress all men with a sense of their common brotherhood and bind them together in one great family.

2. OUR LORD'S HIGH-PRIESTLY PRAYER

In the seventeenth chapter of John is recorded that remarkable intercession of our Lord for his believing children, which took place toward the close of his public ministry, and which has been appropriately called his high-priestly prayer. Let us see what it is he prays for in behalf of his disciples, whether for temporal or spiritual blessings. "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. . . . I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. . . . I pray for them . . . which thou hast given me; for they are thine. . . . Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. . . . Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; . . . that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

This is the greatest of all intercessory prayers, and for this purpose it is as truly a model prayer as is the "Lord's Prayer" a model for private individual prayer. As such it justifies the words of Dr. E. J. Hawkins, of Exeter,

England, who, in writing of intercessory prayer, says: "Intercessory prayer has meaning and efficacy only when the one who prays merges his individuality in the community, seeking not his own, in his love finding his life in the whole, and thus in himself placing the whole under the immediate influence of God."

No reader of this seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel can fail to be impressed with the fact that it is not for material and temporal blessings for his disciples that our Lord is here praying, but the burden of this profoundest of all our Lord's intercessory prayers is that his believing disciples may be holy, sanctified, perfect, abounding in love, and be one with God and with one another.

3. THE GETHSEMANE PRAYER.

Our Lord and his greatest apostle, each, prayed a memorable prayer for deliverance from a physical evil, and no prayers recorded in the New Testament are more full of instruction to believers than these two. In the garden of Gethsemane, under the shadow of the cross, Jesus, who, though divine, was also human, prayed to be delivered from the awful death that awaited him. "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. . . . And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible (all things are possible unto thee), let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. . . . He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. . . . And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." (Matt. 26: 38-44; Mark 14: 34-39.) And St. Luke records that "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." Now Christ, who,

though human, was also divine, could have answered his own prayer; but it is a remarkable and suggestive fact that our Lord never once used his divine power to work for himself a miracle or to secure for himself any temporal and earthly blessing—save, perhaps, when he sent one of his disciples to get the money out of the fish's mouth with which to pay the town tax for him and them.

4. THE PRAYER OF ST. STEPHEN

Among the influences that led to the conviction and conversion of Saul of Tarsus we are fully warranted in giving an important place to the dying prayer of St. Stephen. We can but feel that the impression made upon the mind of the persecutor by the beautiful spirit of this first martyr was deep and lasting. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep." How beautifully simple and sublime was the death of this first Christian martyr! Had he spent his dying breath praying to God for continued life and pleading with his persecutors to spare his life, one of the most glorious and impressive incidents in the history of the Christian religion would have been lost.¹ And so, too, the effectual prayer of the thief on the cross was not that Christ should save him from death, but that he would prepare him for death. If this prayer of the dying thief, however sincere and earnest, had been simply and only for rescue from physical and temporal death, he would have died in his sins no less

¹There come to mind here the oft-quoted lines of a Latin rhyme:

Si Stephanus non precasset,
Paulus nunquam prædicasset.

[Had Stephen never prayed, Paul had never preached.]

than his fellow thief who, impenitent to the last, prayed not at all.

5. THE PRAYERS OF ST. PAUL

No thoughtful student of St. Paul's epistles can fail to have been deeply and devoutly impressed, not only by the spirit of prayer that everywhere pervades his writings, but also by the number and the intensely spiritual character of the prayers recorded in his epistles. We give a few specimens which scarcely need any comment to bring out the fact that they are almost wholly for spiritual objects and ends:

(1) *For the Ephesians*: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3: 14-19; 1: 15-23.)

(2) *For the Philippians*: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Phil. 1: 9-11.)

(3) *For the Colossians*: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye

might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1: 9-14.)

(4) *For the Thessalonians*: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him." (1 Thess. 5: 23; 2 Thess. 1: 11, 12.)

Now the reader cannot fail to be impressed with the absence in these prayers of St. Paul of all allusions to what are known as material and temporal blessings. The blessings which he seeks for his children in the faith are preëminently spiritual. What he is concerned most about is their holiness and their usefulness. If in any case he prays for that which is material and temporal, it is not for its own sake, but always as a means to a spiritual end or as an accompaniment of a spiritual agency and instrumentality which he would have mediated through them. Thus in one of his epistles he represents himself as "night and day praying exceedingly" that he might see the face of his Thessalonian converts, and that God would bring him to them; but he gives the reason in the next sentence: that he "might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.

. . . And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father.” In all the religious literature of the world there cannot be found a parallel or even an approximation to these spiritual intercessions of Paul for his spiritual children—excepting, of course, the one great high-priestly prayer of Christ, of which we have already made a study.

But the assumption that Paul’s prayers were always for exclusively spiritual objects must be modified. There was one notable exception which must now be considered.

6. PAUL’S THORN IN THE FLESH

St. Paul also prayed three times that he might be delivered from his “thorn in the flesh,” which is generally supposed to be some trying physical malady: “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. . . . For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” It is not unreasonable to say that the extraordinary strength of Paul’s character, and especially his power to withstand and overcome difficulties all through life, was due in no small degree to this thorn in the flesh, to the grace that enabled him to bear it and grow strong under and because of the burden thus borne. George Matheson, the blind preacher-poet, author of the hymn beginning “O Love that wilt not let me go,” commenting on the outcome of this

prayer of the great apostle, has said that after this experience Paul "took his thorn and wore it as a flower."

What a blessed thing it is for us poor mortals, praying to be delivered from physical maladies, and from suffering and death, that the Gethsemane prayer of Christ and this prayer of Paul were recorded! And is it not worth something to us also to know that neither the prayer of the faultless Jesus nor that of the saintly Paul for these material and temporal things was answered, except in a spiritual way, by sending an angel to strengthen, in the one case, and all-sufficient grace in the other?

In her "Studies for the Inner Life," Bertha Condé has drawn some most useful lessons from this trying experience of Paul. It would be difficult to improve upon these comments:

We are all sensitive to our own weakness. Like Paul, we long to be rid of the thorn in the flesh. We pray to be delivered from it. If it does not disappear by some special providence, we succumb to it and thereafter use it as an apology for inglorious living. It then becomes our pet weakness and our pet excuse. We speak resignedly of the "nerves" or "liver trouble" or "headaches" which we inherited from our forebears, or the "temper," "melancholia," or "sensitiveness," etc., which has handicapped us. We say we have prayed for some escape from it, but God does not answer our prayer. Read once again this experience of Paul. How does he meet his limitations? He "*besought* the Lord thrice"—an expression of intense earnestness of desire that would not close until some relief came. He was so eager to be rid of this "thorn" that any deliverance by *any* means was welcome. This spirit of downright determination opened his eyes to see the supreme way out; to reduce the power of the enemy by bringing up huge reënforcements of spiritual power. The infinite strength of God must garrison his heart. No answer could be more perfect, because it gave him immunity not only from this thorn, but from all thorns. (P. 189.)

7. THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Our Lord taught a much-needed lesson concerning prayer in his parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a

Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." The Pharisee was, doubtless, a much-praying man, but his prayers were so burdened with self-consciousness and vitiated by self-righteousness as to become spiritually impotent; and his thanksgiving was nothing but an offensive expression of self-conceit and complacent pride. Thanksgiving is often the best kind of prayer, but such thanksgiving as this Pharisee offered had no prayer-value. If he felt justified in offering such prayers and thanksgivings, it was most evident that he could never by such prayers secure his own justification before God. And so Christians now may be justified in congratulating themselves that they are not as other people are, and in praying much for material and temporal blessings; but such prayers, however numerous they may be, and whatever else they may or may not secure, can in themselves alone never secure the forgiveness of sin or one's justification before God. The publican, being a taxgatherer, might not have had good standing with the people, but he had the right idea about religion and prayer: the one supreme object of prayer is, first of all, to get rid of sin and to be justified before God. Prayers that are directed toward this end are effectual and saintly, whether they be offered by Pharisees or publicans, or by God-fearing, sin-forsaking men who are neither the one nor the other. It is well for us to remember that there is no sin in being a Pharisee,

and no saintliness in being a publican. It is that for which one prays that reveals his real character and the quality of his religion.

Importunity and persistence may be a virtue in prayer, but it is possible for them to be misinterpreted by one who thinks that length and loudness in prayer are the evidence of the importunity that has the promise of reward. "We prevail with men by importunity," says Matthew Henry, "because they are displeased, but with God because he is pleased with it." The praying Pharisee searches himself for virtues and others for faults, and his pretended prayer consists in such an enumeration of his many supposed excellences as turns it into an expression of thanksgiving. "The Pharisee justified himself," says Dr. A. T. Pierson, "but God condemns him; the publican condemns himself, but God justifies him. From the lips of a sinner no other prayer than that of the humble tax-gatherer is befitting, and no other will prevail."

8. PETER'S DELIVERANCE FROM PRISON

"Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." (Acts 12:5.) He was delivered miraculously by the angel of the Lord, but it is by no means certain that this is the specific object for which the Church was praying, and that it came in answer to their prayers; for, if it was for this they prayed, it is strange that they should have been so astonished at the answer to their own prayers. We know that, when Peter "came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, . . . where many were gathered together praying," for a long time they refused to believe that it was Peter. It is more probable that they were praying not immediately and directly for his deliverance from prison as an end in itself, but rather that he might

be divinely sustained and made a continued power for good in preaching the gospel; and, to accomplish this latter result, God miraculously delivered him from prison. Such we know was the prayer that was delivered under similar circumstances in the fourth chapter of Acts, where the actual words are fully recorded: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Again, we know that "at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." Now it is quite certain that Paul and Silas were not praying for mere deliverance from prison, for when they were miraculously delivered they made no effort to escape. "The kingdom of God and his righteousness" is what they were praying for; and if that end could be better promoted by their continued imprisonment, or by their dying, like John in the prison, or Stephen at the stake, then imprisonment and death, and not deliverance, is what they desired.

9. SOME HINDRANCES TO EFFECTUAL PRAYER

Quite early in the public ministry of our Lord he warned his disciples against certain dangers and hindrances to effectual prayer, to some of which we do well to call attention.

- (1) The danger of neglecting private, personal, closet

prayer: "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. . . . But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." It is significant that Christ did not add what some of his disciples would doubtless have had him add—namely, instructions as to just how often one should enter his "closet" for private prayer.

(2) The danger of allowing prayers to run into a formal and vain repetition of pious phrases which, however sincere and appropriate in their origin, have lost their moral force and special significance, and also the danger of thinking that the length and frequency of prayers have in themselves anything to do with their efficacy, as if God was pleased with "much speaking," or needed to be instructed as to our wants. "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Now our Lord taught elsewhere (Luke 12: 5-10; 18: 1-8), by the parables of the persistent friend at midnight and the importunate widow, that, where the "much speaking" is due to the profound sense of need and the earnest desires of the person praying, it is a virtue in prayer, and is sure of its reward.

(3) Christ warns us more than once against allowing the material and temporal wants of life (which are matters that concern chiefly our own labor and the Heavenly Father's constant, regular, and general providence) to have too large a place in our prayers: "Therefore take no

thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (See Matthew 6: 5-8, 31-33.) The distinction between Gentile and Christian prayer is thus plainly pointed out: prayer that is directed mainly toward material good and temporal blessings is designated as pagan prayer. Christian prayer is directed first of all and most of all for things ethical and spiritual, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

It is not, however, repetition in prayer that is condemned by our Lord, but "vain repetitions" that are empty and idle and meaningless. Repetition is one of the best methods of emphasizing what one profoundly believes and is anxious to impart to others. We are told that Christ himself in the Garden of Gethsemane "said again the same words" in that most significant of all the recorded prayers which he prayed for himself. But familiar and stereotyped phrases that belong to the popular vocabulary of prayer, pious words that are uttered without any accompanying conscious and serious thought of what is being said, these "vain repetitions" are meaningless. They are very convenient and "handy" for those worshipers who "for a pretense make long prayers." But there is a difference between "much speaking" in prayer and being "much in prayer," between "saying prayers" and offering real prayers. "We may pray most when we say least, and we may pray least when we say most." These true and wise words of St. Augustine are matched by a saying of Luther: "Few words and much meaning is Christian; many words and little meaning is heathenish." And James M. Campbell's comment on

these words is well worth quoting. "It is not the length but the strength of prayers; not their size nor their sound, but their spiritual content; not their word-quantity, but their ethical quality, that makes them acceptable to God."¹

In this brief survey and study of the prayers of the New Testament we have confined ourselves mainly to one characteristic—namely, their predominant and intense spirituality. So plain and conspicuous in them is this quality that no argument is needed to make it appear that, if we would make our prayers like those of Christ and Paul and the other apostles, they must be preëminently for spiritual objects, for freedom from sin, for holiness of heart and life, and for guidance and help in serving our fellow men. We have singled out and emphasized this feature in these prayers because it seems to us that the modern Church is showing an increasing tendency toward magnifying its temporal and visible prosperity, and that material blessings and numerical growth are coming to be more and more emphasized among the objects toward which Christians individually and collectively are directing their thoughts, energies, and prayers. But, whether this fear be well grounded or not, we feel sure that a study of these prayers of the New Testament cannot fail to make the devout reader realize that, however pressing our physical desires and needs may be, and however much we may crave health and wealth and worldly wisdom and prosperity, our first and greatest duty as followers of Christ is to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and count ourselves happy if, in the good providence of God and aided by Divine grace, we can find ourselves growing less sinful, more holy, and more helpful to our fellow men. This is the pathway

¹"The Place of Prayer in the Christian Religion," p. 76.

of prayer along which, if we walk in it, we shall find the light of heaven shining more and more brightly unto the perfect day.

At first I prayed for Light:
 Could I but see the way,
How gladly, swiftly would I walk
 To everlasting day!

And next I prayed for Strength:
 That I might tread the road
With firm, unfaltering feet, and win
 The heaven's serene abode.

And then I asked for Faith:
 Could I but trust my God,
I'd live enfolded in his peace,
 Though foes were all abroad.

But now I pray for Love:
 Deep love to God and man,
A living love that will not fail,
 However dark his plan.

And Light and Strength and Faith
 Are opening everywhere;
God waited for me till
 I prayed the larger prayer.

—*E. D. Cheney.*

CHAPTER ELEVEN
FOUR KINDS OF PRAYER

The man who offers up his petitions with passionate earnestness, with unflinching faith, and with a vivid realization of the presence of an Unseen Being, has risen to a condition of mind which is itself eminently favorable both to his own happiness and to the expansion of his moral qualities.—*W. H. Lecky.*

Prayer to many is a safety appliance. It is founded on fear. They conceive that the saying of prayer is a measure of protection which they would better attend to. *What a pitiful misunderstanding of prayer!* Prayer is not a "good work" in return for which a blessing is given, as men buy and sell over the counter. Our pious practices are as useless as a Tibetan prayer wheel, unless at the heart of them all is conscious fellowship with the Father who cares.—*Harry E. Fosdick.*

We learn, too, to see the perfect blend of the material and spiritual in this world. If prayer were always answered at once, our desires would grow to be more material and we would merely seek great things for ourselves because of their easy possibility. In waiting for our prayers to be answered we learn that "the gift without the giver is bare," that we are all in the world, but not of it. It is the triumph of life to live in the spiritual plane while as yet we are still touching the material. Realizing this, we walk through life with a more than human power.—*Bertha Condé.*

XI

FOUR KINDS OF PRAYER

THERE are four kinds of prayer of which we wish to speak in this chapter: First, sinful prayer, prayer that is declared to be an abomination unto God; second, saintly prayer, prayer for distinctly moral and spiritual objects; third, prayer for material and temporal blessings; fourth, intercessory prayer, prayer for others. These need to be carefully distinguished, for they involve different conditions which should be understood by all who engage in prayer and look for answers from the Heavenly Father.

1. SINFUL PRAYER

Among the different kinds of prayer that are recognized in the Bible and need to be clearly distinguished, we consider, first, prayer that is positively evil and wicked: "The sacrifice (prayer) of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight." (Prov. 15: 8.) "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." (Prov. 28: 9.) "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James 4: 3.) "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Ps. 66: 18.) "When ye spread forth your hand, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood." (Isa. 1: 15.)

These passages of Scripture are not to be interpreted as teaching that it is wrong for a sinner to pray; for God invites all to approach him in penitence and faith, and asking is made the condition of receiving. The penitent's

prayer is one of the conditions of his pardon. But the Scriptures here quoted do teach that it is idle—yea, worse than idle, it is wicked—for anyone to pray who is an impenitent sinner and knows that he is a sinner, and both desires and purposes to continue in sin at the very time he prays. What does it mean for the drunkard, the gambler, the thief, the libertine, the devotee to worldly and sinful pleasures to pray for the Divine blessing upon him when he purposes in his heart, at the very moment he prays, to continue in his besetting sin? It is mockery; it is “an abomination to the Lord.”

Sinners are encouraged and invited to pray; but he comes in vain to the mercy seat who comes with no thought or desire or purpose to give up his sin, comes with the idea that he can pray for and obtain material and temporal blessings by praying for them, while he is, and proposes to continue, the indulgent and willing servant of sin. Penitence, which means sorrow for sin, a sincere desire and effort to break off from all sin by God’s gracious help, is not only a condition of all efficacious prayer, but it is a condition the conscious absence of which renders prayer to God insincere, and it may be even pernicious in its influence upon a self-complacent and sinful worshiper. If indulgence in prayer under such conditions and with such accompaniments should have the effect of deluding a sinner into the idea that he becomes by such prayers in some meritorious degree religious, his very prayers would not be helpful but positively hurtful, and worse than none at all in the moral effect they would thus have upon him. His prayers, as a matter of course, not being for spiritual blessings, could only be for some worldly good that he craves and would vainly seek by prayer to obtain from God whose holy will he in no way cares to obey. “It is a sad sight,” says Dr. R. L. Swain,

“to see one seeking temporal gifts from God at long range before he is willing to extend the hospitality of a contrite heart to God himself.”

John Wesley said of some of the imprecatory psalms, which invoke dire and awful vengeance upon the psalmist's enemies, that they were not fit to be used in public worship or to be taken upon the lips of a disciple of Him who taught his followers not only to love their enemies, but to pray for them who spitefully use them and persecute them. Does this mean, then, that these imprecatory prayers of the Old Testament are to be regarded by us as positively sinful? We are not, I would say, shut up to this estimate of them. They are rather to be explained as pre-Christian than condemned as sinful.

The enemies from whom the Psalmist prays to be delivered are spiritual as well as personal. These imprecatory psalms are, indeed, a stumblingblock to many worshippers; but it may be said that, while they do not breathe the spirit of the New Testament, and are not uttered in New Testament phraseology, it would be well if all Christians would do now just what David and his companions did, to this extent, namely, refuse to take personal vengeance on their enemies, but commit their punishment into the hands of God. We can afford to allow large liberty in prayer to that man who commits the punishment of his enemies into His hands who has said: “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” These imprecatory prayers reflect the religious ideas and customs that prevailed in ancient times. The fact that they now grate on our feelings reminds us of how much we owe to Christ, and his example and teachings. But whether we can reconcile such prayers with true Old Testament ideals or not, certain it is that they are utterly incompatible with Christian ideals.

2. SAINTLY PRAYER

The second kind of prayer may be designated as saintly. It is prayer for distinctly moral and spiritual blessings, for freedom from sin of every kind, for holiness of heart and life, for inward and outward conformity to the revealed will of God, for likeness to Christ our great pattern, for the possession of all the virtues and attributes of Christian character that are set before us in the Bible. To this kind of prayer are attached the large promises of the Bible which carry the assurance of being answered.

If, now, it be asked why God did not condition spiritual blessings simply upon the asking, and not upon faith, the answer is easy. A man without faith, without those inner spiritual qualities which faith here stands for, upon whom spiritual blessings might be bestowed, would have no capacity for receiving or retaining that which should be given. He could be compared only to a blind man who would ask to be shown the sights which he could not see; or to a deaf man, to whom words might be spoken that he could not hear; or to an ignorant man, to whom great truths might be uttered which, for lack of mental capacity, he could not understand. It would be like speaking precious words of love to one who had no heart to appreciate them. A thousand spiritual blessings bestowed upon an impenitent sinner, following as he does the devices of his own heart and seeking not the things that be of God, would mean nothing; there would be no receptivity in him for such things.

Hence the formal asking for spiritual blessings can never secure them; there must be a heartfelt desire, a holy yearning, an asking in faith, or there would be no fitness in bestowing them. Thousands of prayers, both public and private, which are orthodox enough and seemingly

spiritual enough, go unanswered; and why? It is because it takes a deep hatred of sin, a holy yearning for righteousness, and an implicit faith in the asking, to make it possible for God to impart spiritual blessings, or for man to recognize and receive them if imparted; and these conditions are wanting. The upturned cup alone can be filled and retain that which fills it. But the spiritual man who prays in faith for spiritual blessings not only shall receive them, but he has them already, in a true sense. The man who in his heart is sincerely yearning and praying for spiritual things is already spiritual and has in good part the blessings he is praying for. It is in view of this fact that our Lord said; "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11: 24, R. V.) This is true only in the case of him who, having fulfilled all the conditions of prayer, prays for spiritual blessings; it is not true of prayer for purely physical and temporal things.

"A mere formalist can always pray so as to please himself," says Dr. C. H. Spurgeon, "but the living child of God never offers a prayer which pleases himself; his standard is above his attainments; he wonders that God listens to him, and though he knows that he will be heard for Christ's sake, yet he accounts it a wonderful instance of condescending mercy that such poor prayers as his should ever reach the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth."

3. PRAYER FOR MATERIAL AND TEMPORAL BLESSINGS

There is a third kind of prayer which may be designated as innocent and legitimate, not in itself either sinful on the one hand, or saintly on the other. It consists most largely in prayer for material and temporal blessings. That it is legitimate and proper for Christians to pray for material and temporal blessing, the answer to which would

involve an intervention of divine power within the realm of natural law in a providential, though not necessarily miraculous, manner, can be proved from the precepts and examples of prayer found in the Bible. Solomon prayed for wisdom to enable him to rule wisely over his people, and his prayer was not only commended of God, but richly answered, though to pray for wisdom showed that he was already wise. (1 Kings 3: 5-13.) Hezekiah prayed for length of life when his sickness was unto death, and his prayer was answered. (2 Kings 20: 1-7.) Elijah prayed for rain, and the rain came in answer to his prayer. (1 Kings 18: 36-46; James 5: 17.) Jacob (Gen. 28: 16-22), Rachel (Gen. 30: 22), Hannah (1 Sam. 1: 11), Eliezer (Gen. 24: 12-14), Gideon (Judges 6: 13), and Nehemiah (Neh. 2: 4), each offered prayer for material and temporal blessings as distinct from those which are purely and exclusively spiritual. In the Lord's Prayer is the petition: "Give us this day our daily bread." St. James says: "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another and pray for one another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5: 13-16.) These examples and references undoubtedly justify the Christian believer in including material and temporal blessings among the objects for which he prays.

But prayers belonging to this third class, it should be observed, have necessarily a large measure of conditionality involved in them. A literal answer to them is con-

ditioned not simply upon the character and faith of the person praying, but also upon the Heavenly Father's wisdom and omniscience, seeing that he will send his children only what is best for them. It is safe to say that but a small number of the purely material and temporal blessings which Christians desire and seek would be a real blessing to them—that is, would make them either holier or more useful. On the contrary, the obtaining of these material blessings would often make them less spiritual and less useful as members of the body of Christ and servants of their fellow men. God could not, perhaps, do many of those who pray a greater spiritual harm than to send them literally the things they pray for, the material riches and creature comforts they crave.

In the Old Testament dispensation temporal prosperity was commonly regarded as proof of the Divine favor and blessing, whereas adversity was regarded as an evidence of the displeasure of God. The old dispensation was much more material, much less spiritual, than the New Testament dispensation. Hence the prayers of the Old Testament are much more for transitory blessings, and much less for purely spiritual blessings, than those of the New Testament. Nevertheless, notwithstanding this fact, the prayers of the Old Testament, taken altogether, are more largely for spiritual objects than a superficial reading might lead one to suppose. Solomon's prayer for himself was not wholly for the wisdom of this world, and God commends him because he did not pray for purely material and temporal blessings; and his dedication prayer (1 Kings 8) is for temporal blessings only as they may be preceded and accompanied by forgiveness of sins and other spiritual blessings. The prayer of Daniel for deliverance from captivity is one of the most intensely

spiritual prayers anywhere recorded in the Bible. (Dan., chapter 9.)

The two notable instances of prayer for material blessings found in the New Testament, to which reference has already been made—viz., the petition for daily bread, in the Lord's Prayer, and for restoration to health, in the Epistle of James—are also inseparably connected with prayer for spiritual blessings. The brief petition for daily bread in the Lord's Prayer is both preceded and followed by numerous petitions for things wholly spiritual, and the above quotation from James shows that we are encouraged to pray for health in sickness only as that prayer is accompanied by confession of sin and prayer for forgiveness. It is, therefore, the kingdom of God and his righteousness that we are to seek first of all and above all in prayer; and "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." But to the deeply spiritual man whose whole life is consecrated to his God and the service of his fellow men, the distinction between the secular and the sacred largely disappears, and all things become sacred. The saintliness of his life spiritualizes its material aspects.

4. INTERCESSORY PRAYER

We have said that prayer for purely spiritual objects, where all the scriptural conditions are met, has absolute certainty of being answered. This is true only when the individual prays for himself. When he prays for others, the answer to his prayers is conditioned not simply and only on his own faith, but also on the free will and the faith of those who are prayed for. Nothing is more common than for regenerate believers to pray for the salvation of their unconverted friends, for Godly parents to pray for the conversion of their wayward and godless

children. Such faith and prayers have great encouragement and hope of reward in the Bible, but have not the absolute certainty of being literally answered, because God converts no man against his own will simply in answer to another's prayers. That prayer for the salvation of individual sinners and loved ones often receives its reward in the conversion of those prayed for admits of no doubt, and this is none the less true because we may not be able to point out just how the Holy Spirit accomplishes the result prayed for. While, therefore, intercessory prayer may not, and does not, secure any irresistible influence of the Spirit, such as will certainly result in the conversion of a sinner who persists in impenitence and resists the Spirit's influence, yet it may and often does secure the operation of such divine agencies as result in the conviction and awakening of the sinner, and under such conviction he may and often does exercise such repentance and personal faith as result in his salvation. Many an impenitent sinner is made penitent by knowing that he is loved and prayed for by another, and, becoming penitent, he is led to pray for himself the prayer that prevails.

There is no phase of the subject of prayer that is more perplexing than intercessory prayer. We are not only taught by the Lord's Prayer to address God as "our" Father, and thus by this fellowship in prayer recognize all men as belonging to the one great human family of the Heavenly Father, but we are commanded to pray for others. There is surely no prayer which we are commanded to offer that is without real moral and spiritual value, if it be offered in faith. But it is important for us to understand that there are conditions and limitations involved in intercessory prayer that do not apply to prayer offered by one for himself. These limitations grow

out of the fact that every individual prayed for is a moral free agent, and in the very nature of the case God cannot compel a free agent against his own free will to repent and believe and be saved, no matter how many people may be praying for him. To ignore the relation of human free agency to prayer is not only to plunge into perplexities inexplicable, but to lay the foundation for permanent doubt and denial of any and all value to intercessory prayer. We must never forget in praying for others—as, for instance, for the conversion of sinners—that, when God made men free, he placed limitations upon the exercise of his own will, and in answering prayers of intercession for others we can only count on his using his Divine power to influence those prayed for in such ways and to such an extent as may be compatible with human free agency. If this were not the case, then it would follow that one man with unbounded faith in God's power and promises could pray for the instantaneous conversion of all sinners in the whole world, and his prayer would be answered. Exaggerated and false views as to the province and power of prayer have the effect not of increasing but of destroying faith in intercessory prayer.

But let us not conclude because no man can be converted, or compelled to act in the realm of moral volitions independently of his own will, that therefore there is no need of invoking the aid of other wills, human and Divine, to work upon and in and for him. And because we cannot be sure just exactly how, and how far, human wills and the Divine will act upon and influence the will of a sinner that is prayed for, we must not conclude that intercessory prayer is a vain and valueless thing. We have abundant reason for believing that the intercession of believers for their fellow men avails much, even though it does not and cannot prove always availing and all-

availing in securing the results prayed for. We may not be justified in saying to parents, praying for the conversion of their children, what St. Ambrose said to Monica, the mother of her very wicked boy, Augustine: "Woman, go in peace; the child of such prayers cannot perish." While it is true that the child of many a pious, praying mother has "perished," in spite of a mother's prayers, it is also true, profoundly true, that the children of pious, faithful, praying parents—taken altogether and compared with the children of parents who do not pray—have a way of turning out marvelously well in life, especially if the parents pray *with* them as well as *for* them.

"True prayer never stops with petition for one's self. It reaches out for others. Intercession is the climax of prayer. It is the outward drive of prayer. It is the effective end of prayer outward. Communion and petition are upward and downward. Intercession rests upon these two as its foundation. Communion and petition store the life with the power of God; intercession lets it out on behalf of others. The first two are necessarily for self; this third is for others. Communion and petition ally a man fully with God; intercession makes use of that alliance for others. Intercession is the full-bloomed plant whose roots and strength lie back and down in the other two forms. Intercession is the form of prayer that helps God in his great love-plan for winning a planet back to its true sphere." ¹

It is doubtful whether, after we have done our best in prose to define prayer, we can quite equal the definition which the poet, James Montgomery, has given in his well-known hymn titled "What Is Prayer?" which, indeed, is regarded by many as one of the most perfect examples

¹ S. D. Gordon, "Quiet Talks on Prayer," p. 39.

of didactic poetry found in the English language. It is interesting to know that the author regarded this as the most successful and useful hymn that he ever wrote. Few things that have ever been written on prayer have contributed more to an understanding of its true meaning than this familiar Christian lyric, which has, therefore, large theological as well as poetic value.

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.
Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.
Prayer is the contrite sinner’s voice,
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, ‘Behold, he prays!’

Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air;
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.
O Thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.”

CHAPTER TWELVE

PROVIDENCE, PRAYER AND THE LAWS OF
NATURE

We may be ignorant of what or how we ought to ask, but the asking, the cry of the soul, is as much a law of life as is the appetite for food and drink a law of the body. Whatever else God may be, he is at least the eternal energy behind all nature and all law. When we discover a rule in the physical or mental world, we simply discover a principle in accordance with which God acts. He could act otherwise, if he so willed, without in the least disturbing the uniformity of nature, but observation and reflection lead us to believe that he does not so will. Hence, wherever the will of God is expressed unmistakably, as, for example, in the law of gravitation, or of the succession of the seasons, or the finality of death as a temporal event, prayer has no place; for prayer itself is a force which acts in harmony with the fundamental laws of the universe. Hence its realm is in the realm of the possible, not of the impossible. It functions in those regions of experience in which the accomplishment of the Divine will waits on the coöperation of the will of man. *How* prayer operates we cannot tell, any more than we can tell how the mind acts on the body. But in the one case as in the other, the facts are open to observation and experiment.—*Canon Samuel McComb.*

In the most skeptical man or generation we find prayer always underground, waiting. Even Comte, with his system of religion that utterly banished God, soul, and immortality, prescribed for his disciples two hours of prayer daily, because he recognized the act itself as one of the elemental functions of human nature. Whether, therefore, we consider the universality of prayer, or its infinite adaptability to all stages of culture and intelligence, or the fact that it is latent in every one of us, we come to the same conclusion: prayer is a natural activity of human life.—*Harry E. Fosdick.*

XII

PROVIDENCE, PRAYER AND THE LAWS OF NATURE

MANY are content to stop with a general declaration of faith in providence and prayer, making no inquiry as to how God works out his special providences in behalf of his children. But to thoughtful minds certain questions are inevitable: Can God answer prayer and work in a providential way in the physical realm without setting aside the normal operation of the laws of nature and working miracles? Can God providentially guide the lives of his children without overriding the laws of mental and moral freedom, and himself causing the volitions of the human will? It is impossible to escape questions like these. It behooves us to give them the best answer we can.

Ours is an age of science, and the scholarly and scientific world believes profoundly in the abiding uniformity of nature's laws. It is also, and none the less, an age of psychology, and psychologists and philosophers, mental and moral, believe in the essential freedom of the human will. It is, in like manner, an age of faith, and men believe in a personal God.

The foregoing questions cannot, perhaps, be better answered than by pointing out the difference between miracles, as this term is used in traditional theological literature, and that exercise of Divine power within the realm of nature's laws which we call providence. The Divine will must operate in some way both within the realm of physical law and within the realm of human free will if Divine providence is to be recognized as an essential

and abiding factor in the ongoing of the world. Not all facts are factors. Divine providence, if we rightly interpret it, is not only a fact, but a factor—a divine, dynamic, and indispensable factor and force without which our world, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual, could not be what it is.

1. SPECIAL PROVIDENCE AND ANSWER TO PRAYER DISTINGUISHED FROM MIRACLE

A special providence, when accomplished within the realm of the physical world, is to be carefully distinguished from a miracle both in the mode by which it is wrought and in the purpose for which it is wrought. A miracle, as that term is commonly understood and used in theological literature, is an event in the external and natural world that would not happen under the ordinary and uniform working of nature's laws, being brought about by the direct, special, and immediate intervention of Divine power, and is accomplished without the necessary use of natural and ordinary means, and is wrought mainly for the purpose of furnishing an open and public attestation of Divine revelation. A special providence, on the other hand, is an event equally due to the exercise of Divine power, but accomplished through the Divine use of the laws of nature, or of human agencies, or of both. For a man to use a law of nature, or the agency of a fellow man, in the doing of anything, does not make a miracle of it; it rather means that a thing done in this way is *not a miracle*.

To illustrate the difference between a miracle and a providential exercise of Divine power, let us take the case of one who, we will assume and suppose, is sick unto death, and who, we will assume, if left to the operation of nature's laws and merely human agencies, under the

general providence of God will surely die. If, now, God should design to work a conspicuous miracle in such a case, and furnish thereby a manifestation of supernatural power, he would discard physicians, nurses, and medicines—that is, all natural agencies—and by the simple word of his power in an instant heal the sick one. And, of course, if God does this through a commissioned prophet or apostle, it is none the less his work, supernaturally accomplished. This mode of accomplishing the desired result would be exactly suited to the end in view—namely, the conspicuous manifestation of supernatural power in accomplishing a work which no mere man in his own wisdom and strength, using only natural and human agencies, could perform.

On the other hand, if the healing should take place as a result of a special divine intervention of power in what we have called a providential way—as, for example, in our day in answer to prayer—God would not discard physicians, nurses, and medicines, and the patient's own activities, both mental and physical, but work through all these agencies, blessing and guiding them to accomplish the result desired by man and approved by divine wisdom, but a result which would not have come to pass but for *his* intervention. And here, again, the mode adopted would be that best suited to accomplish the end in view—namely, encouraging all concerned to use nature's laws (which are God's laws) and yet honoring the piety and faith of the individual, or individuals, immediately concerned by granting them the ends sought by them and approved by God as good. Here there is a divine use of both physical laws and human agencies, but there is no miracle, no setting aside or overriding of the normal operation of natural law. This is God's providential way of working.

Whatever God may or may not have done in past ages, we are not encouraged to believe that in our day any miracles are being wrought in the physical world, using that term in the sense in which it is used in both traditional and prevalent theological literature. We must recognize, of course, the opposition of this last statement to the teachings of those who believe in "ecclesiastical miracles," and also of those who are known as believers in "faith cures"—that is, those who believe that diseases of the body can and should be healed by the immediate exercise of God's power, secured through faith and prayer, and this without reliance upon the use of medicines or the medical knowledge and skill of physicians. This is an erroneous and hurtful misinterpretation of the Christian doctrine of faith and prayer. "There is," says Dr. Charles F. Deems, "nothing in reason, nothing in common sense, nothing in the word of God to set aside the Christian belief that now, from time to time, God may, in answer to prayer, and will, when he sees fit, raise up a man from sickness unto perfect health. But there is nothing in reason, or common sense, or Holy Scripture that justifies the setting up of faith-shops and the peddling out of faith-cures to the neglect of the known remedial agents which God has placed in nature."

"God only manifests himself in extraordinary events," says Auguste Sabatier, "in order that we may learn to recognize him in ordinary ones." Whatever God may have done in the way of working miracles was that we might open our eyes to see his presence and power in his ordinary and regular providential government of the world. Whatever manifestation God may have made of himself in what we have called the supernatural, it was that we may have an abiding revelation and vision of him in the natural, and commune with him in our daily life.

Science which knows its limits cannot forbid the act of confidence and adoration of piety. Piety, in its turn, conscious of its proper nature, will not encroach on science; its affirmations can neither enrich, impoverish, nor embarrass science, for they bear on different points and answer different ends. My child is ill; I procure for it the best advice and the best remedies; but, confiding in God's mercy, I beg of him to spare my child, or, in any case, to help me to accept his will. The child recovers. What savant will forbid me to thank my Heavenly Father? Will this be because my thanksgiving will be a denial of the science of the physician? Certainly not; for my gratitude will include the fact of the doctor, the medicine, the care bestowed, the whole series of second causes that have contributed to the recovery of my child. Was not this the piety of Jesus when he taught us to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, thy will be done; give us our daily bread"? Was he ignorant of the fact that in order to have bread we must sow wheat? No; but none the less he asked his food from God, because he knew that, in the last resort, it is the will of God that makes the substance and the order of things.¹

No one can think seriously on the nature and needs of a free agent like man, and on his highest development as a rational and moral being, without seeing that God's providential method of dealing with him and meeting his physical needs is far better than a miraculous method would be. Under the latter, God would do things for him, simply demanding that he ask in faith to have them done. Under the former, the providential method, God helps man to help himself, helps man in the use of the laws of nature, and inspires and guides him along the line of his own highest and best self-development. This more excellent providential method of making men and ministering to them has been very forcibly stated by Henry George in his discussion of the laws of human progress. He says:

Suppose we should pray and our prayers were heard, and that, at the behest with which the universe sprang into being, there should glow in the sun a greater power; new virtue fill the air; fresh vigor come to the

¹"Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion," p. 79.

soil; that for every blade of grass that now grows two should spring up, and the seed that now increases fiftyfold should increase a hundredfold! Would poverty be abated or want relieved? Manifestly no! Within our own times, and before our very eyes, that Power which is above all, and in all, and through all; that Power of which the whole universe is but the manifestation; that Power which maketh all things and without which is not anything made that is made, has increased the bounty which men may enjoy as truly as though the fertility of nature had been increased in answer to man's prayers. Into the mind of one has come the thought that harnessed steam for the service of mankind. To the inner ear of another was whispered the secret that compels the lightning to bear a message around the globe. In every direction have the laws of nature been revealed; in every department of industry have arisen arms of iron and fingers of steel, the effects of which upon the production of wealth have been precisely the same as would have come from an increase in the fertility of nature. And what has been the result? With steam and electricity and all the new powers of progress, forces have entered the world that will either compel us to live on a higher plane or overwhelm us, as nation after nation and civilization after civilization have been overwhelmed in the past. And think of the infinite fields of knowledge yet to be explored, of the possibilities of which the wondrous inventions of the past hundred years give us but a bare hint.

The miraculous, supernatural method of meeting men's physical needs in answer to prayer would enervate and pauperize the human race. The providential method of meeting these needs, on the other hand, by helping man to help himself through the normal and diligent exercise of his own mind and the right use of the established order of nature—this is what develops and enriches, dignifies and ennobles man. Whatever importance attaches to faith in miracles and in God's supernatural order as a thing of the past, certain it is that the potency of the Christian religion and the hope of the human race in our day depend upon men's faith in providence and the right use of God's providential order. No amount of zeal in the defense of the miracles and supernatural revelations recorded in the Bible can compensate for being blind or even dull of vision and obtuse to the presence and power

of God which in our day manifest themselves not in miracles, but in providence—in a providence which, though Divine, nevertheless depends for its highest efficiency and full results upon free creatures who are coworkers with their Creator and upon whose coöperation and fidelity God has seen fit to make his own plans to await their fulfillment.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE OF PRAYER FOR THINGS PHYSICAL

To many Christian believers neither of the foregoing assumed modes of healing a sick person is satisfactory, or even a legitimate assumption, because, say they, in no case can it be shown that healing takes place as a result of special divine intervention either in a miraculous or in a providential manner. They believe that the only agencies that enter into the problem of healing are natural and physical laws and human skill in their use; that faith and prayer, whatever value they may have, do not bring about any special divine intervention affecting the body of the person prayed for. They believe that God makes absolutely no discrimination between one person and another where physical law is operative; that if, over and above the moral and spiritual results of faith and prayer, there be in certain cases beneficent physical effects, these are to be either physically or psychologically explained in keeping with the laws of man's physico-spiritual nature.

And does this mean that because it cannot be proved beyond a doubt that prayer avails in the healing of the bodies of the sick, therefore it is useless to pray for the sick with any idea or expectation that physical benefits will result from such prayer, no matter how great is the faith exercised by the person praying? What, then, is the explanation and justification of praying for the sick in

this age of science? Among possible answers some people would make reply to this question after the following manner:

A Christian man may believe in the uniformity of nature's laws and in the very great value of an accurate and scientific knowledge of these laws, and believe at the same time in prayer. For prayer means to a Christian believer the invocation of the aid of Him to whom nature's laws owe their efficiency and who can without violating these laws use them, and who can also work upon and in and through the skilled physician and nurse without violating or setting aside any law of human freedom that finds expression in the free will and skill of those who take part in the treatment of the sick. The Christian man may not be able to tell just what is due to the normal working of nature's laws or to the medicines used, nor what is due to physicians and nurses, nor what is due to the God of nature, the great Physician, whose aid he invokes in the cure of the sick one prayed for. But he does not let this uncertainty cause him to decline to use any one of the several possible sources of aid.

There are some people, now, who believe that we ought not to allow this uncertainty to cause us to ignore and dispense with any of these aforementioned sources of possible aid, except one—namely, prayer; this, say they, is useless. But they would count him very culpable if not criminal who should fail to use each and all of the other agencies. Surely a Christian parent who believes in the uniformity of nature's laws, and in the value of scientific knowledge in the use of them, and in a Divine Being who is the Creator, Preserver, and prayer-hearing Governor both of nature and of human nature, surely such a theistic believer will not be acting unreasonably if he invokes both human and Divine aid in his use of nature and

its laws to cure his child. And yet there would be no "miracle" (as that term is defined and used in theology) if God should intervene and in answer to prayer bring to pass in a providential manner that which, but for his intervention, might not have come to pass.

The fact that laws are uniform does not prevent man from working through them and thereby causing that to come to pass which but for his intervention would not have occurred. A father and mother call in the family physician to aid them in the cure of their sick child. But for the physician's intervention the child might have died. But it was still by nature's own workings that the child was cured. And this would be true even if the sorely distressed parents and the deeply perplexed family physician should unite in calling in to their aid as an expert the most skilled physician within reach that he might use his more accurate and scientific knowledge of disease and nature's laws, to bring about the cure of the child. Still there is no "miracle" if the child is cured; nature's laws have not been superseded and set aside, but only wisely used.

Now, of course, it may be made a matter of speculation after health is restored as to whether the child would not have gotten well if the more skilled physician and specialist had not been called in; indeed, if the family physician had not been called in. And even if the parents had given the child no medicine at all, some one may say he believes the child would have gotten well just the same. And what does this inability to settle the question as to who and what cured the child mean? Does it mean that the next time the child is taken sick the skilled physician need not be called in? that the family physician may be dismissed? or, perchance, that nature's laws should be left alone, without any use even of medicines,

to cure the child? Surely not. On two points all reasonable people will be agreed—namely, first, that it was by the working of nature's laws the child was cured, no matter how much the child's cure is due to the physicians and the medical treatment given; and, secondly, that it is little less than criminal if, when a child is taken with a serious disease, a skilled physician, the best available, be not called in by the parents to aid in the cure of the child. Is it not, then, altogether reasonable that one who believes not only in the uniform operation of nature's laws and in the value of skilled physicians who understand these laws, but also in a prayer-hearing God, the Heavenly Father, to whom these laws owe their efficiency and uniformity, should, when sickness comes, invoke the aid of God as well as the aid of the physician to cure the sick—be it himself, or his child, or his friend, as the case may be?

"Prayer is a great mystery," says Canon McComb, "but so also is the healing virtue of medicine. We are as ignorant of the mode of operation in the one case as in the other. The truly scientific physician does not overlook or despise any means of cure. He knows that all alike are inexplicable. Hence the time will come when in the general opinion it will appear as unscientific to believe in medical treatment without prayer as it now seems fanatical to believe in prayer without medical treatment. I venture to prophesy of the day when we shall have an ideal hospital in which the highest resources of scientific medicine shall be linked to a rational faith expressing itself in reverence and devotion in union with the creative and health-giving Spirit."¹

"When we pray for a friend's life that seems endangered," another thoughtful writer has said, "such prayer

¹ "The Power of Prayer," p. 61.

may not be an influential cause in arresting the physical progress of disease by an iota. But it may bring a fresh suggestion to the mind of a physician or other attendant to adopt a remedy which by natural means 'turns the tide' of ebbing life, and determines the recovery of the patient. . . . The latent power that lies within the free causality of man may be stimulated and put in motion from a point beyond the chain of physical sequence; and crises innumerable may be averted by human prayer."

There are Christian believers, however, to whom this method of explaining and justifying prayer for things physical is not satisfactory. In a recent volume of essays Prof. Kirsopp Lake, of Harvard University, has a chapter on "God and Prayer" in which he names petition, communion, aspiration, and confession as the four elements or aspects or purposes of prayer. The first of these ingredients of prayer, petition, which has constituted such a large part of the prayers of the past, he thinks, is destined to disappear from prayer in the "religion of to-morrow," while the other three elements will abide. He seems to confine "petition" to prayers that pertain to those aspects or phases of life which come under the domain of the laws of nature. With this meaning in mind he says of petition some things which will be read with interest by many who may not wholly agree with the author:

Probably few educated men believe in its efficacy, The laws of life—which is the will of God—are not changed in their working by prayer, sacrifice, or fasting. In my boyhood (in England) it was still customary to pray for fine weather, or, on the rarer occasion when the English climate demanded it, for rain. The custom is now, I fancy, almost dead. It has not been killed by any atrophy of religion, but by increased knowledge of meteorology. If you teach the public every week day in the newspaper that the weather is fixed through complicated laws, that if the barometer is rising fair weather is probable, while rain may be expected if it is falling, you cannot expect them to believe on Sunday that the humidity of the atmosphere will be affected by prayer.

Nor is the case very different with regard to prayer in time of sickness, though the issue is often obscured by pious people who cling to the custom and do not analyze their belief. Opinion probably ranges itself on this subject into three groups. There are those who still think that prayer will cure disease, and there are those who, frankly admitting that prayer cannot change the course of disease, advocate it as a consolation to the sufferer and his friends. This is no doubt often true; it is a sound and charitable reason for praying, but it is likely to lose its efficacy when its motive is perceived. Finally, there are those who think that in some mysterious way they can by prayer divert a stream of energy to a sick person, and so make him better. . . . It seems to me that, if there be any truth in this theory, it is not so much that prayer diverts a stream of healing energy as that it serves as a "suggestion," focusing all powers of resistance and recuperation which the sick may possess, but be unable to "will" to use. That this may be valuable, and should be practiced, I do not doubt; but is it prayer? In any case it is not the same thing as the strictly supplicating prayer of our ancestors, which was a petition to God, who might be persuaded to do what he might not otherwise have done. That the religion of to-morrow will have prayer I do not doubt; but I do not believe that it will have any more place for "petition" than it will have for any other form of magic.¹

3. PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER IN HARMONY WITH SCIENCE AND REASON

That it is possible for one who believes in the reign of uniform and universal law to believe also in a rational doctrine of Divine providence and in the value of human prayers cannot be denied. Theistic believers of this type abound in the modern world, and defend their views with statements which show that they refuse to be classified either with agnostics or with disbelievers in Divine providence. If the government of the physical and moral world be by the immanent and everywhere active God, it follows that the nature, the will, and the wisdom of the Divine Being are expressed in physical and moral law, both of which are as uniform and immutable as the wisdom and the will of the Creator. When men pray to God

¹"The Religion of Yesterday and To-Morrow."

to do thus and so, in accordance with their desires, their prayers will be effective, and will be answered, only in so far as they desire and pray that the Divine will may be done. The poet's words, "Our wills are ours to make them thine," are so true we need often to quote them. If human wills are perfectly conformed to the Divine will, then the accomplishment of the Divine will is the perfect realization of the human also. This does not mean that human free will amounts to nothing, and that all things are as though men had no wills of their own; on the contrary, it means that man's freedom finds its perfect expression and realization when, in being realized, God's will is also realized.

But God's will and power and wisdom are expressed, in the physical world, in the reign of uniform and universal law, just as in the moral world they are expressed in the reign of uniform and universal moral law. It is only when men conform themselves to God's will and government, not his government to their wills, that things are as they should be and the Divine order is realized.

We have, then, both rational and scriptural ground for believing that God's present and permanent providential government of the universe includes and involves the bringing to pass not only of spiritual events, effects, and results in the moral and spiritual world, but of such events and results in the physical world as, being approved by his wisdom and being in no way violative of his laws, are adapted to serving man's highest needs as a physico-spiritual being. This means, and must mean, that physical nature, with its multitudinous laws, is not a blind, self-moving stream, not an automatic, mechanical machine, nor a series of self-governing forces in which God himself is imprisoned and into which man has been cast by birth and circumstance to drift or make a landing

wherever he can and as best he can, but that it is a world governed by a personal God for the best interests of personal beings. It means that God so controls nature and all its laws as to make them work together for the moral and spiritual good of all those who as rational and moral free agents are ever seeking to know and do his will and to serve their fellow men. This is the conception which Christian theists have of God's relation to the world.

If this conception be true, it is entirely proper and right that Christians should include in their prayers objects and ends, to accomplish which, in answer to their prayers, God must needs exercise his divine power, in a providential manner, in the realm of natural and physical law. While Christian believers, however, are justified in praying for material and temporal blessings, in the light of Biblical teaching and example, and are encouraged to hope that these prayers may be answered in a divinely providential manner, they should remember that answers to such prayers are, in a peculiar sense, conditioned, not merely upon the believer's desires and faith, as is the case in prayers for purely spiritual blessings, but also upon the wisdom of the Heavenly Father, who will answer literally prayers for purely material blessings only when it is, and in so far as it is, for the moral and spiritual good of those offering them—and it is probably true that, oftener than otherwise, the material blessings prayed for by even devout Christians would diminish rather than increase their piety and usefulness. We may understand, then, that God's special providence over and in behalf of his children, though directed mainly to spiritual objects and ends, does not discard the use of natural agencies, but uses these agencies, working in and through them for the accomplishment of special moral ends. Surely if God

in his providence makes use of things physical for moral ends, it cannot be either irrational or improper for men to pray for things physical.

In keeping with this line of thought, Dr. S. H. Mellone, writing of "Prayer and Experience," says:

The providential order of the world, Thomas Aquinas observes, is so far from excluding secondary causes that it is actually realized by their means. These causes fall into various grades of importance and worth. They are not limited to natural or physical agencies. Among other causes human actions hold a very important place. We act, not because anyone supposes that by doing so we can change the Divine ordinance, but because we act in order to attain our ends. In so far as these ends are harmonious with the Divine plan they are *good* in the full meaning of the word. In this respect petitionary prayer is on the same level with human actions in general. We do not pray in order to change God's ordinance, but in order to achieve those things which in God's ordinance are possible to be achieved by petitionary prayer. "Therefore to say that we should not pray to receive anything from God because the order of his providence is unchangeable is like saying that we should not walk to get to a place, nor eat to support life." There is no reason for excluding petitionary prayers from the general system of things; and, if so, then effects follow from them by divine appointment as from other causes. Aquinas therefore concludes that "if the immutability of the Divine plan does not withdraw the effects of other causes, neither does it take away the efficacy of prayer."¹

"There is a place, and a large one, for answer to prayer." So writes Professor D. C. Macintosh, of Yale University. "The verbal expression of prayer is not prayer. Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, but it is more than that: prayer is the right religious adjustment, and there are objective effects following the right religious adjustment which would not be experienced without it. This is the dependable human experience in the answer to prayer. But it is also a dependable human experience that the heavens are as brass toward any petition that asks for what is *against* the laws of nature. There is a law of prayer and

¹"The Power of Prayer," p. 89.

its answer. But there is no place in the best possible kind of world for the arbitrary interruption of the established natural order."¹

Not, therefore, because God has nothing to do with nature, but rather because he has everything to do with it, does it behoove man to believe in and adapt himself to the uniform course of nature. Natural law is not something independent of God, not something the uniformity of which he cannot break. On the contrary, the uniformity of nature's laws is due to the immanence, the uniformity, and the immutability of the Divine Being, without whom there would and could be no creaturely world and no laws of nature.

4. THE VITAL QUESTION INVOLVED

Some devout believers in miracles and special providence will perhaps say that this method of explaining Divine providence is to explain away its divine quality rather than to explain it. The justice of this criticism, however, will not be admitted by that large number of modern theists who believe that God is working as divinely and miraculously to-day as he ever worked, and that we should interpret the past by the present. They maintain that, however devoutly men pray for the intervention of God's power in bringing to pass specially desired results in the realm of nature's laws (as, for example, for rain in the midst of a drought, healing of the body in case of sickness, material prosperity in the midst of poverty, continued life in the prospect of death under nature's laws, and such like things), the practice of Christian believers reveals the fact that in this realm of life their main and real reliance is not upon Divine intervention, but upon securing results through the operation of na-

¹"The Reasonableness of Christianity," p. 97.

ture's laws by the use of human agencies and whatever other effective natural means may be available. Having done all that can be done to bring about desired results, including appeal both to the Divine and to human agencies, then, if the result is different from that desired, the praying believer acquiesces in whatever comes, accepts it as the expression of Divine providence, and says, "It is God's will; his will be done!"

This being true, the vital question involved is not one pertaining to the mode according to which God answers prayer and exercises his providential power, but whether his providential power and wisdom are expressed in and exercised through the laws which he established in the beginning and which he is still maintaining in both the physical and spiritual world. It is when suffering and death are coming alike to the sparrow that falls and the saint who dies—that is, when there is no special intervention of Divine power in the realm of nature's laws to prevent or alter their operation—that Christ teaches that the Heavenly Father's special love and providence are present and most manifest. Christ tells us that neither sparrows nor men shall fall to the ground—that is, shall suffer and die—without the Heavenly Father's notice and care, but he does not tell us that they shall not be permitted to fall and die. His providence and care do not, in any degree, prevent their being subject to the laws of nature with all attendant consequences.

Says Professor Bousset, from whom we have already quoted wise words:

Have we the right to pray for this and that, to pray that definite outward events and incidents should come to pass? It is here that disputes and skepticism come in which strike at the most important and holiest part of our religious life and shake its very foundations. We must try to get rid of this doubt to which an overzealous faith has exposed prayer; we must establish this most important fact in our religious life on

a perfectly sure foundation. . . . Prayer remains an absolutely real and efficacious fact. Everything around us may, indeed, remain unchanged, but we ourselves, at any rate, are changed by prayer. And this signifies a very great deal. For God's personal care for us, in which we believe, would be perfectly ineffectual if we individuals did not understand and comprehend it; if we did not rightly interpret and understand the guidance which God brings to our life; if we went to the left when God commanded us to go to the right.

We are not forbidden to ask God concerning the shaping of outward events and occurrences, and in such cases there is no absolute and permanent dividing line between the important and unimportant, the inward life and outward facts. At each special prayer for such things, however, we remind ourselves that God knows what we need before we ask him, and gives according to his wise judgment. And to every such prayer we add what Jesus taught us in the darkest hour of his life, "Not my will, but thine, be done." And so our prayer of entreaty is but the expression of the vivid, intuitive feeling that we receive our whole life from God's hands.

When we study carefully the ways of Providence and the results of prayer, observation and experience alike teach us that God's children are often led to a providential goal by a way they know not, and that they often build wiser than they know. This fact should warn us against giving up faith in providence and prayer when discouraged by the fact that things are not going to suit us. We are prone to grow impatient at the long delays and hidings of providence, and at what seems to be unanswered prayer; but there is often divine wisdom and love in the delays experienced in waiting for ripening providences and for answers to prayer. It is the weak soul that cannot wait; real faith is not only tested but strengthened by having to wait. There is often Divine discipline in delay.

"Experience and history," says Dr. S. H. Mellone, "teach that human endeavors are made to bring forth results more far-reaching and important than the agents themselves could even have imagined; and different actions of different people are made to work together to bring about results which the agents never foresaw—re-

sults whose importance the agents would not have understood if they had foreseen them, and which are often entirely contrary to the deliberate designs of these agents themselves. A familiar analogy may be found in natural history in the way in which bees, all intent on their own concerns in gathering food and wholly unconscious of any further purpose in their actions, do actually, by carrying pollen from flower to flower, effect fertilization, and so maintain the whole species of vegetable life in existence.

"No more impressive illustration can be found than is afforded by the ever-renewed spectacle of disappointed hopes and designs, well-meaning and high-motivated, which have ended only in failure. In this aspect of it the lesson is written for us large and plain in the life of the discoverer of the Western Continent. Columbus, whose faith was sublime as compared with the general mind of his age, and whom most men believed at first to be insane, sailing west to discover a route to the fabled wealth of China and the Indies, stumbling upon a whole new world, yet knowing it not, persistently clinging to the false idea that he was almost at the gates of the great Khan's capital, and dying at length broken-hearted because so little, as he thought, had resulted from his stupendous dream—this man is not only a good but a typical illustration of how men in failing may become unconscious instruments of ends greater than all their dreams. What was there, in his trumpery vision of gold and gems to be had in the East almost for the asking, to be compared with the life that now peoples that Western world upon which he stumbled unawares and the permanent contributions which that life has made to the welfare of mankind?"¹

¹ "The Power of Prayer," p. 85.

5. THE APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE

From the beginning of time men have been praying to God. The history of religion is very largely a history of prayer. Through the centuries men have been praying for two different kinds of objects, for things material and physical, and for things moral and spiritual. Let us appeal now to the results of experience to determine the value and efficacy of prayer. The scientific method of testing the value and truth of a scientific hypothesis is to try it out in the experiments of a well-equipped laboratory. If the experiments are such as to prove that, although all proper conditions for making the experiment have been met, the hypothesis or theory has utterly failed to make good in the testing, it is abandoned and discarded as valueless.

What, now, is the result of mankind's age-old experience in the matter of praying? It is of course of the utmost importance to make sure that all proper conditions have been met in the experiments made. While recognizing that different results will be reported by different individuals, we feel justified in saying that, however varied and conflicting and unsatisfactory may be the returns from those who have prayed for material, temporal, and earthly blessings that concern the physical good of the individuals praying or prayed for, and the answer to which involved a divine intervention in the realm of natural law—however confusing and uncertain these may prove—the returns from those who have prayed for moral and spiritual blessings, and who have met in their prayers all the divinely prescribed conditions involved, have been so satisfactory and so convincing that the children of God and disciples of Christ who pray and have confidence in the efficacy of prayer are more numerous in the world and more confident to-day than ever before.

It is only because prayer gets things done in the moral and spiritual realm and because those who pray have continued from age to age to receive their promised spiritual reward, that we can account for the continuance of prayer as a part of the daily worship of intelligent, reasonable, and reasoning men. There are many superstitions and delusions that characterize the religious faith and worship of uncivilized, benighted, and ignorant people, and they may be expected to believe and practice in their religion many things that have no rational justification whatever. But not so with civilized, serious, thoughtful, and cultured people; they would not continue to pray from age to age if experience proved that there is nothing of value in prayer. It was President Eliot of Harvard who said: "Prayer is the transcendent effort of human intelligence." Prayers, true prayers—thoughts and feelings and volitions and petitions which are alone worthy to be called true prayer—these belong to the religion and worship of intelligent and thoughtful people alone. There is no sign that intelligent, thoughtful believers in an overruling Divine Being are ceasing to pray and are doing so because they have come to the conclusion that prayer is without moral and spiritual value. On the contrary, prayer fills a larger place in religion than ever before in the history of the Christian Church.

In writing of the utility of prayer, Dean Charles R. Brown, of Yale University, says:

Human beings have always had the habit of prayer. There have been cities without walls, without schools, without markets, without books, without many things that we ordinarily associate with city life; but never a city without its places of worship and prayer. The fact that it is thus widespread and has endured through all the centuries indicates that it has utility. Useless organs disappear or become rudimentary. Unless prayer sustains some vital relation to man's well-being, it would not have thus endured. The fact that the human race

always has prayed and that a greater volume of intelligent prayer is being offered in this twentieth century than ever before raises a strong presumption that such an exercise of one's powers is rational and useful. . . . And what, let us ask, have been the broadly ascertained results of this widespread and long-continued effort to realize kinship with God through prayer? The cumulative answer comes back from the multitudes of praying men: Hearts have been renewed, affections purified, wills strengthened, aspirations lifted; great and gracious answers of peace have come; added security and confidence have been enjoyed. We need not turn to those exceptional and surprising 'answers to prayer' sometimes collected into books of anecdote. Curious coincidences have sometimes been urged as foundation stones for confidences in the efficacy of prayer. Fortunate occurrences have been overworked in the supposed interests of a conquering faith. In this consideration I would ground my faith in prayer rather upon the broad and ordinary lines, where there are uninterrupted answers coming back to men as they pray. The spiritual results of the habit of honest prayer are so well ascertained as to lend strong aid in lifting this exercise into the place of dignity and the region of high confidence where it belongs. . . . Thoughtful people keep on praying, assured by the promises of Christ and by an ever-increasing volume of religious experience, that prayer works its own beneficent results.

And it may be well to reënforce this claim that prayer has an essential place in religion because the experience of the race proves that it has real value and efficacy, especially in the moral and spiritual realm, by quoting the strong words of an eminent scholar and author who was a pronounced believer in the scientific doctrine of evolution, and also in the everlasting reality of religion as it finds expression and proof in the always and everywhere present instinct of prayer that characterizes man—primitive, ancient, medieval, and modern man. The late John Fiske wrote as follows:

In nature we have found it to be true that everywhere the internal adjustment has been brought about so as to harmonize with some actually existing external fact. The eye was developed in response to the outward existence of radiant light, the ear in response to the outward existence of acoustic vibrations, the mother's love came in response to the infant's needs. If the relation established in the morning twilight of man's existence between the human soul and a world invisible and

immaterial is a relation of which only the subjective term is real and the objective term is nonexistent, then, I say, it is something utterly without precedent in the whole history of creation.

The lesson of evolution, therefore, is that through all these weary ages the human soul has not been cherishing in religion a delusive phantom, but, in spite of seemingly endless groping and stumbling, it has been rising to the recognition of its essential kinship with the ever-living God.¹

Indeed, John Fiske went so far as to affirm that for an evolutionist, in the face of the universal God-instinct of the human race, to deny the reality of God and the scientific basis of religion and prayer in universal human nature was tantamount to denying the fundamental principle on which faith in evolution rests. The instinctive and universal outgoing of the human mind and heart toward God proves, he contended, that there must be a God who can respond to and satisfy this innate instinct and irrepressible craving of the human soul.

It thus appears that faith in the Divine Being as a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God is at once rational and scientific and justified and confirmed by the testimony of a cloud of witnesses gathered from all races and from all ages.

In Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox's lines of blank verse, titled "Unanswered Prayers," there is deep philosophy and sound theology as well as choice poetry, and there is no phase of the doctrine of prayer on which these lines shed light more truly than on that phase which we have had under consideration in this chapter. Whoever interprets "unanswered prayer" after this manner has learned some of the most vital truths connected with the spiritual life and the Christian doctrine of prayer.

¹ "Through Nature to God," pp. 189, 191.

"Like some schoolmaster, kind in being stern,
 Who hears the children crying o'er their slates
 And calling, 'Help me, Master!' yet helps not,
 Since in his silence and refusal lies
 Their self-development, so God abides
 Unheeding many prayers. He is not deaf
 To any cry sent up from earnest hearts;
 He hears and strengthens when he must deny.
 He sees us weeping o'er life's hard sums;
 But should he give the key and dry our tears,
 What would it profit us when school were done
 And not one lesson mastered?

What a world

Were this if all our prayers were answered. Not
 In famed Pandora's box were such vast ills
 As lie in human hearts. Should our desires,
 Voiced one by one in prayer, ascend to God
 And come back as events shaped to our wish,
 What chaos would result!

In my fierce youth

I sighed out breath enough to move a fleet,
 Voicing wild prayers to heaven for fancied boons
 Which were denied; and that denial bends
 My knee to prayers of gratitude each day
 Of my maturer years. Yet from those prayers
 I rose always regirded for the strife
 And conscious of new strength.

Pray on, sad heart:

That which thou pleadest for may not be given,
 But in the lofty altitude where souls
 Who supplicate God's grace are lifted, there
 Thou shalt find help to bear thy daily lot
 Which is not elsewhere found."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
THE SPIRITUALITY OF PRAYER

Christian prayer, strictly speaking, is not an act, not even a series of acts; it is essentially an attitude of mind. All spiritual search is spiritual aspiration, and all spiritual aspiration is spiritual life begun. We reverence the man of Christian prayer because we reverence the things he prays for.—*George Matheson.*

Formerly I was greatly concerned as to whether God would answer my prayers. Now, my whole concern is as to whether I will answer God's prayers; for he cannot answer mine unless his are answered by me. Once I prayed, my will be done, and felt grieved if it were not. Now, I pray that my will be done if it is his will. If my will is not done, I know who, if anybody, is to blame. The saddest and most appalling thing I know is for the Lord of all being to bend in supplication before one of his children and have his request flatly refused. No thought has ever come to me that has sobered and steadied me more, or that has hushed me into deeper silence before God, than this: Am I willing to answer God's prayers? Am I willing to do what he asks me to do, and to be what he would help me to be? Is there any use of my praying to him if he cannot successfully pray to me? It is easy to believe that if I answer his prayer, he will answer mine. How could I better fulfill all the conditions necessary for the answering of my own prayers than to answer God's prayers to me whole-heartedly?—*R. L. Swain, in "What and Why Is Man?"*

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries: "It shall be done."

—*Charles Wesley.*

XIII

THE SPIRITUALITY OF PRAYER

PRAYER, some one has said, is the soul's pilgrimage from self to God. A study of the history of prayer reveals the fact that the higher individuals and races have risen in moral and spiritual character, the less selfish and material have been their prayers, and the more moral and spiritual the blessings they have sought in prayer. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." Men and races may be graded morally and spiritually by the prayers they pray.

"It is not surprising," says Sabatier, "that prayer should, in its turn, be transformed, and that, having at first been the most violently interested act of life, it should come in the end to be a pure act of trust and self-abandonment, of disinterestedness the most religious and complete. Is there need of many words for a child to make its father understand? It is the heathen, says Jesus, who make many prayers. The Father knows your needs before you ask him. It is a mark of unbelief to be anxious about food and raiment and the future. The essential thing is not to multiply petitions, but to live near him and feel him near. Is he not Almighty and all good? Does he not love you better than you love yourselves? Does he not make all things work together for the good of his children? If trials come, or dangers threaten, what ought we to do? Submit to God, as Jesus did. What is such prayer as his but the defeat of egoism and the perfect liberation of the individual spirit in the feeling of its plenary union with God? . . . Such was the prayer of Jesus. It

did not consist in an outward flow of words, but in a constant, silent state of soul which made him say in turning toward his Father: 'I know that thou hearest me always.' Confidence increases with renunciation. Admirable progress of religion! Sublime reversal of rôles! At the beginning the ambition of the pious man was to bend the Divine will to his own; at the end his peace, his happiness, is to subordinate his wishes and desires to the will of a Father who knows how to be gracious, righteous, perfect. . . . Nothing better reveals the worth and moral dignity of a religion than the kind of prayer it puts into the lips of its adherents. Now, progress is more apparent here than anywhere else. The savage beats his fetish when it is not complacent enough. The Christian in his greatest distresses repeats the prayer of Jesus in the Garden: 'Father, not my will, but thine, be done!' What a long road man has traveled between these two extreme points of religion."¹

1. WHAT IS MEANT BY SPIRITUALITY IN PRAYER?

The spirituality of a Christian worshiper may be truly determined by his prayers. It is not a question as to how much he prays, but what he prays for, that is the true index of the quality of his religion and of his character as a Christian. It is quite possible for one to pray several hours daily, and address all his prayers to the triune God, and yet be a very poor type of Christian. Suppose it were found that a certain one spent two or more hours daily in prayer to God. At first thought that might indicate a more than ordinarily pious man. But suppose it were learned that the burden of all his prayers was that he might be prosperous in business and accumulate a large fortune, that all his worldly plans and ambitions might

¹"Outline of the Philosophy of Religion," see pages 109-113.

prove successful, that he might enjoy perpetual good health and every material and earthly blessing that makes creature happiness in physical and social life complete, and "then go to heaven at last"; and suppose there were little or nothing in his prayers that would indicate a yearning after freedom from sin and holiness of heart and for larger service to his fellow men, what must be the effect of such a discovery upon our estimate of him as a Christian? Why, plainly, it would reverse that estimate, and the much-praying man, instead of being regarded as more than ordinarily pious, would at once be seen in his true light as a very low type of Christian. Indeed some might question if he be any sort of genuine and true Christian at all.

On the other hand, if it be found that the burden of the worshiper's prayers is that he may be free from all sin, pure in heart, holy in all manner of life and conversation, perfectly conformed to the will of God in all things, ready for any service or sacrifice the Master's work may demand; and that, so far as material and temporal blessings are concerned, his desire as revealed in his prayer is that God would in his wise providence send him prosperity or adversity, riches or poverty, health or sickness, according as he in his omniscience sees will best serve to make him a holy and useful man—if this be what the worshiper prays for, there can be no doubt that he possesses a high and exalted type of saintly Christian character, and this is true whether he spends a half hour or two hours daily in prayer. It is thus what a man prays for rather than how much he prays or how orthodox and eloquent his prayers, that best determines what kind of Christian he is.

There is one of our most popular hymns, beginning, "What a Friend we have in Jesus," the main thought of

which is that we should "carry everything to God in prayer." That is true.

"There is no sorrow, Lord, too light
To bring in prayer to thee."

But, while this is true, we are persuaded that many Christians abuse the privilege of taking everything to God in prayer by filling their prayers with trifles, with petty wants which belong exclusively to the physical and material aspects of life, things which, while they have their legitimate place in prayer, should be made entirely secondary and wholly subordinate to that which is the true theme and main object of prayer—viz., the moral and spiritual. They seem to think that the main thing in prayer, the essence of true prayer, consists in uttering things to God; that the main thing is to spend so much time in talking to God, and that what we talk to God about and seek from God is a secondary consideration. This is a serious error. Prayer, of course, must be addressed to the triune God to be genuine Christian prayer; but beyond this it is a matter of the utmost importance what we pray for. Our petitions should be worthy, worthy of God and worthy of ourselves as his children. It is right, we repeat, to take everything that concerns us in prayer to God; but let not the Christian believer think that he can fill his precious hour of prayer with petitions for what God must account as trifles, and come up to his high calling as a child of the prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Moral and spiritual wants are the Christian's real and all-important wants, and these should constitute the chief object of his desires and the burden of his prayers to his Heavenly Father.

By no one has this aspect of prayer been more clearly recognized and more judiciously treated and emphasized

than by James M. Campbell in his volume titled "The Place of Prayer in the Christian Religion," where he says:

Prayer becomes, in this new Christian view, something which is concerned more with man's higher than with his lower interests: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added." Temporal things are not excluded from the range of prayer, but with the true Christian they are always made subordinate. The praying Christian fixes his supreme desires upon spiritual and eternal things. As Origen said: "He asks great things, and little things are added; he asks heavenly things, and earthly things are added." To reverse this order and change this emphasis is to make prayer unchristian. When prayer is made by Christ to be a thing of the spirit, it ceases to be identified with and confined to altars and sacred shrines, and is so spiritualized and universalized that any spot on earth may be turned into a holy temple where worshiping souls may hold communion with the unseen but omnipresent Father. In Christian prayer, thus understood, there are heights of privilege and power to which, it may be, we but seldom rise; but when we do take full advantage of our privilege, prayer not only brings God consciously near, but places within our reach all the spiritual riches of the universe.

2. THE BIBLICAL EMPHASIS ON THINGS SPIRITUAL

We once made a study of the prayers of the Bible and of the teachings of Scripture on the subject of prayer in order to prove to a friend that the Bible encourages us to pray for material and temporal blessings, even where the answer to such prayers involves a divine intervention within the realm of nature's laws, as in case of prayer for prosperity in business, health in sickness, rain in drought, and similar things of a material and temporal nature. We confess to not a little disappointment in finding the material for our argument so scanty in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, to the prayers of which we have already given consideration. Hezekiah's prayer for health, Elijah's prayer for rain, the petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," and St. James's encouragement to pray for the sick, came readily to our service; but beyond these the examples and pre-

cepts that *encouraged* praying for purely material and temporal things did not present themselves so readily and copiously as we had anticipated. Indeed, Hezekiah's restoration to health and the rain that came at the prophet's bidding seemed designed so much more as extraordinary and miraculous events than as answers to ordinary prayers of faith that we seriously doubted whether we were justified in appealing to them as proofs that such answers might be expected to ordinary and daily prayers for these and like physical results. The result of our investigations on the subject in the Old and New Testament Scriptures may be summed up in these three statements:

(1) The positive precepts concerning prayer and the examples of answered prayer which pertain plainly and exclusively to material and temporal blessings are relatively few in number, if the Bible be taken in its entirety, but they are quite sufficient to justify the Christian believer in including such things among the objects for which he prays. That they should, however, be made secondary and subordinate to other and higher objects and ends of a moral and spiritual nature is abundantly proved by many other precepts and prayers found in the Scriptures.

(2) The promises and prayers of the Old Testament, taken in their entirety and interpreted in the light of Christ's references to them and use of them, are predominantly for moral and spiritual objects¹—this being true in

¹Consider, for example, how Christ in the great Temptation met and answered Satan's quotations of Old Testament promises of an apparently material nature with his own higher and more spiritual interpretation—not, indeed, denying their application to man's physical nature and needs, but placing such emphasis on the deeper and higher moral truth they contained and the spiritual lessons they taught that the lower, the physical, was, as it were, swallowed up in and overshadowed by the higher, the spiritual.

spite of the fact that Hebrew thought and faith dwelt most largely on transitory promises pertaining to the life that now is and less than Christian believers do on the blessedness of the future and eternal life. On the other hand, the prayers of the New Testament—which of course is, in a matter of this kind, more especially the Christian believer's guide—are almost exclusively for moral and spiritual objects and ends, and the Bible everywhere not only justifies but encourages believers, by every possible statement and by the largest possible promises, to seek moral and spiritual objects in their prayers.

(3) There is abundant encouragement to pray for things material and temporal, provided they be sought not for their own sake as physical blessings, but for the ultimate moral and spiritual ends they may help to serve in attaining the true end of life—namely, holiness and usefulness here and a blessed immortality in the life to come.

If any reënforcement is needed for the views we have here set forth as to the emphasis on spirituality being the most notable characteristic of the prayers of the Bible and especially of the teachings of the New Testament concerning prayer, it is found in the following clear and strong statements taken from Dr. C. R. Brown's volume titled "The Main Points":

Two things ought ever to be borne in mind: the chief object of prayer is not to get something. The claim has been made that if we only have faith we can get anything we want. Jesus had faith. He prayed: "Let this cup pass from me." It did not pass. He drank it next day upon the cross. But he continued in prayer until he could say: "If I must drink it, not my will, but thine, be done." The purpose of prayer is not to enable a man to stand before God and say: "Not as thou wilt, but as I will." Its deeper purpose is to bring him into that harmony with God, where he will say: "Thy will be done." It would be a calamity if every ignorant prayer were answered; if the world were wholly managed by our wishes rather than by his higher wisdom. The chief purpose of prayer throughout is not that of getting our will done,

but the enjoyment of that richer privilege of being with the Father and of being brought into active harmony with his holy will. The prayer that brings us into voluntary harmony with the divine purpose has in that very fact achieved a gracious answer.

The model prayer given us by our Lord, after the manner of which we are instructed to pray, moves chiefly in the realm of moral and spiritual things, and all prayer offered in the spirit of Christ will lay the emphasis there. We have, indeed, Scriptural warrant for praying in regard to interests other than those directly spiritual, but always with an eye to the bearing of those benefits on the coming of his kingdom in our hearts and in the world. The material advantages sought are subordinate to the spiritual benefits which stand as the supreme ends to be gained in prayer. Pray for health, for intelligence, for opportunities, for the success of legitimate plans, but always that in and through these you may the more perfectly glorify God as a useful servant of his holy will! To pray with this subordination of private interest to the larger demands of the coming kingdom is to pray in the name of Jesus Christ. This indicates that prayer must be ethical and that it can only be effectively offered by those who are bringing their lives by personal consecration into right relations with the King of the kingdom. When it is thus offered, the hand of the petitioner is knocking at a door which opens on the treasure house of the Unseen—and he may do it in the confident assurance that “to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.”

3. THE SPIRITUAL THE TRUE REALM OF FAITH

The doctrine of prayer sometimes suffers at the hands of those who do not properly discriminate between the material and the spiritual as realms for the exercise of faith. The inference is drawn from their teachings that, if we only have faith that God will do what we ask of him, it is a secondary consideration whether our prayers be for things material or things of high moral significance, for temporal or spiritual blessings. This is a hurtful error. The true realm of faith is not the material and physical, but the moral and spiritual world. Few things are more harmful to faith and more calculated to lead to ultimate skepticism in religion than to teach that the large promises of God found in the New Testament, which make all things possible to him that believeth, apply to prayers

for material, physical, and temporal things just as they do to things moral and spiritual. This is not true. The Bible must be read with thoughtful discrimination; otherwise its inspired revelations and promises which are designed to establish and encourage our faith will land us in hopeless spiritual confusion, if not indeed in positive skepticism.

The superiority of Abel's worship over that of Cain consisted, we are told, in the faith exercised by the former, but it must not be overlooked that this faith, exercised under Old Testament ideals, showed itself in the kind of sacrifice that he chose to offer. An effectual prayer may differ from an ineffectual one in its faith, in the quality and quantity of faith, but it is also true that a Scriptural and spiritual faith will show itself in what it asks for, in seeking only, or at least mainly, that which will make the worshiper a holier and more useful man. The context shows that it was of moral and spiritual things that our Lord spoke when he said: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11: 24.)

A person may pray exclusively for material things, for that which concerns his physical, intellectual, and social life. This our Lord calls Gentile prayer: "After all these things do the Gentiles seek." On the other hand, one may decline to pray at all for purely material and physical things, and this for either one of two quite opposite reasons: either because he thinks that all such things are entirely subject to the uniform and unalterable laws of nature and God has nothing whatever to do with their coming or failing to come to us; or he may believe that the omnipotent and omnipresent and loving Heavenly Father has everything to do with such matters, and is already, by his constant and watchful providence, sending

to each of his believing and faithful children, who himself toils and obeys the laws of nature, such material blessings as are for his spiritual good; and that, therefore, he should devote his prayers altogether to seeking spiritual ends and blessings. This last seems to us to be the doctrine taught by our Lord in the closing verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." If our Lord here in any way discourages his disciples from praying for the lower material wants of life, it is certainly not because the Heavenly Father does not consider these things and care for all that concerns our physical, intellectual, and social nature, but because he does already and always abundantly care for these things, and designs that we shall make the higher moral and spiritual ends of life the main object of our prayers. A Christian believer may thus, through a very high motive, while allowing all liberty to others, find himself disposed to give but little place in his own prayers to his purely physical and temporal wants. This, however, does not mean that he will be slothful in his business, but quite the contrary; the spirit of earnestness and prayer will pervade his whole life, its secular no less than its spiritual side. An ideal Christian prayer should be comprehensive and consciously relate one's whole life to God whose providence embraces within its watchful and loving care all our needs, physical, intellectual, and spiritual.

He is a poor physician of souls, and is ill-prepared to make a diagnosis of the spiritual diseases with which men

suffer, who has not learned the close and vital connection that exists between the physical, mental, and spiritual elements that enter into a man's composite nature. There are some diseases of the body that have their cause and cure in the mind alone, just as there are abnormal conditions of mind that find their explanation and their rectification in the physical condition of the individual. It is likewise true that religious experiences and spiritual moods are so closely related to both physical and mental conditions that only a spiritual adviser who has a reasonable knowledge both of physiology and of psychology is prepared to help those who are in a morbid religious condition or a state of spiritual depression. There is curative value for the body sometimes in an idea of the mind; and an idea may kill as well as cure.

A sane, serene, happy, and hopeful faith in God and in the efficacy of prayer are not to be despised or ignored among the real curative agencies to be employed in treating the diseases both of mind and body. Nor in doing this is there any resort to magic; the uniform laws of nature are in no way superseded and set aside; they are simply supplemented and reënforced by the operation of the laws of mind and spirit which are just as real, and in many cases just as potent and important in the service they render, as the laws of physical nature are. All that is true and of value in "Christian Science" is to be explained in this way. There are some ideas and beliefs that are self-executing in the realm of matter, in the bodies of the thinkers and believers who entertain them. There is a sane and healthful use of this law of life; but like all laws it is subject to misuse and abuse. "According to your faith be it unto you," said Christ to many who came to him with bodily as well as spiritual ills. All that is true in psycho-analysis can and should be made avail-

able in prayers that pertain to the ills of mind and body. But this is a field where fanaticism and religious fads abound and thrive, against the invasion of which those who believe in Christian prayer need to be on guard.

The doctrine of "faith cure" has at best this evil tendency, that it directs the Christian's faith and prayers mainly toward physical and material things, whereas a study of all the precepts and examples of prayer in the Bible tends to minify the physical as an **object** of prayer and to magnify the spiritual as the thing of transcendent importance among the objects we are to seek from God. To take the one case of Hezekiah's restoration to health and the one case of the prophet's bringing rain by prayer and the instances of miraculous cures of bodily ills by our Lord, and make them the foundation of a universal doctrine of prayer, as if they proved that all Christians, everywhere and at all times, should expect in answer to prayer restoration to life and health, rain in drought, and such like things, is to use them in an unwarranted way and make them raise expectations in the heart of the simple but devout believer that are not only doomed to disappointment, but the disappointment is liable to be followed by serious injury to the faith of him who was thus led to accept as a doctrine of God, that which was only a doctrine of man, and land him in the end in hopeless skepticism. There is as much reason for believing and teaching, from the fact that Elijah was fed by the ravens, that God will keep true believers alive and in health without their having to work for the obtaining of food—indeed, just as much reason for believing and teaching that he will keep believers in health and strength without eating at all, if they will but pray and trust him—as that he will cure them in sickness without the aid of physicians or nurses or medicine, which

is, in a sense, but the food needed by the bodies of the sick.

What is needed in this material age is not to encourage believers to pray for the needs of the body (which they are already too prone to do) and to make the material world the sphere in which to exercise their faith, but, on the contrary, to make them more spiritual by directing their faith and prayers toward the needs of their souls, toward the attainment of those moral and spiritual qualities which constitute the true values of the soul and the true end of the Christian life. The faith that "laughs at impossibilities and cries, It shall be done," will ever do its mighty work mainly in the realm of spiritual things. He alone who prays the saintly prayer can hope in and through his prayers to be endued with power from on high.

4. THE ESSENTIAL THING IN PRAYER

Perhaps some readers of this volume are disappointed in not finding here many things which they are accustomed to find in treatises on prayer by way of suggestion and instruction to worshipers; suggestions as to how often one should pray, and how long a time he should spend in prayer; the desirability and advantage of having a consecrated closet or chamber into which one may enter and be uninterrupted in his devotions; what devotional use should be made of the Bible and other good books on prayer; what language is especially fitting to one who comes with petitions into the presence of the King—suggestions concerning private prayer, family prayer, public prayer, intercessory prayer, the prayer list, the morning watch—these and many other features and phases and accompaniments of prayer that might be named. These things all have their value and their place in prayer; but

they are not the things that are vital to prayer. We have been concerned here especially with that which belongs to the essence of prayer, which essence, if it be contained in one's prayers, makes it not an unimportant but a secondary matter how often or how seldom one prays, how long or how short his prayers, how orthodox and fluent or how faulty and faltering his words of prayer. The essence of prayer is found in a conscious and abiding right relation to God, in always seeking to know and to do his will. If we can be sure that this attitude toward God characterizes the man who prays, all these other things named above can be left to take care of themselves, while each individual decides for himself what is best.

I find myself in hearty agreement with some things which Dr. Borden P. Bowne has said as to what he regards as the essence of prayer, and with his method of connecting prayer with Divine providence, the one great purpose of which is to make of moral free agents under test and trial here such moral and spiritual beings as shall, by doing the will of God, glorify their Creator and attain happiness and immortality for themselves. "Our earthly life," says Dr. Bowne, "is arranged by Divine wisdom for our discipline and development as the children of God. In such a life we need preëminently to recognize our dependence on God, to relate our life to his will, to seek to enter into fellowship with him. This religious desire and effort of the soul to relate itself and all its interests to God and his will is prayer in the deepest sense. This is essential prayer. Uttered or unexpressed, it is equally prayer. It is the soul's desire after God going forth in manifestation. It may find expression in petition, or in worship, or in obedience, or in multitudinous forms of activity; but the thing itself is always the same—the soul's striving after God. This is the prayer which may exist without

ceasing, consisting, as it does, not in doing or saying this or that, but in the temper or attitude of the spirit."¹

"We must not conceive of prayer as an overcoming of God's reluctance, but as a laying hold of his highest willingness," says Archbishop Trench truly. "If God does not give to us at our first asking, if he only gives to those who are importunate, it is not because our prayers make any change in him, but because our importunity has made a change in ourselves and rendered us proper objects of God's gifts and graces." Thus wrote William Law, who understood as few writers have the conditions of effective prayer. Possibly there is no phase of the doctrine and the practice of prayer where Christian believers equally devout and consecrated will be found to differ more widely than in the matter of the length and frequency of their private prayers and in the manner in which they find it necessary to show their importunity and persistence in prayer. One man finds it necessary to agonize in prayer and to spend long hours, if not in "wrestling with the Angel of the covenant," at least in meditation and communion with God as the only way whereby he can find satisfaction, peace, and power through prayer, and he is almost tempted to doubt the piety of those who can be content to spend far less time in prayer than he does. To another man neither long hours nor agonizings of spirit add to the efficacy of his prayers, and he is almost tempted to doubt whether the man who has to agonize and tarry long at the mercy seat has learned the real secret of prayer and the true way of quick and easy access to the Heavenly Father by faith and simple, childlike trust. The temperament of the individual and the crises that may come in an individual's life have much to do

¹"The Essence of Religion," p. 131.

with determining matters such as these in the practice of prayer.

Most of our Lord's prayers were as simple and natural as breathing, or as the song of a bird, and they were doubtless as a rule brief utterances; but there came a time when he spent a whole night in prayer, and also a time when he agonized mightily in prayer. The journals and biographies of the saints of all ages reveal much to us as to the efficacy of prayer, but they also warn us against making hard-and-fast rules to regulate the prayers of God's children. The truth is, God does not particularly want our prayers; he wants us, and our prayers have value only in proportion as they express a complete giving of ourselves to him. Any prayer that stops short of a complete surrender of our wills to the Divine will and of the absolute consecration of ourselves to the service of God and our fellow men, stops too soon, and there is need for just so much agonizing, and no more, as may be found necessary in any given case to secure the same result, that is, absolute self-surrender and self-consecration. Luther, Fletcher, Whitefield, David Brainerd, and multitudes of useful and saintly men that might be named, spent hours and hours daily in prayer, and some of them spent all this prayer time on their knees. And yet Spurgeon, the great London preacher, though not less saintly and useful than they, once after hearing of a man that "spent three hours upon his knees pleading for a certain blessing," remarked with deep feeling: "I could not do it, even if my eternity depended upon it. Besides, if I go to the bank with a check, what do I wait loafing around the premises for when I have got my money? The fact is, long prayers are often the result of unbelief." Of course it is easy to reply, that some customers who frequent the bank of prayer are held up by the Banker longer than Spurgeon was before their

drafts are honored and their checks are paid. All of this means that in the practice of prayer each individual must take what to him is the way of easiest access to the power house and to obtaining the power. In prayer we are paid in power.

Few writers on prayer have seen this truth so clearly or expressed it more strongly than the author of "The Place of Prayer in the Christian Religion," who says:

The difference must never be overlooked between God's treatment of prayer for temporal and for spiritual blessings. Temporal blessings are never promised by him absolutely; spiritual blessings are. He may have good and valid reasons for withholding the one; he can have no possible motive or interest in withholding the other. The material is always relative; the spiritual is always absolute. Hence the absoluteness that belongs to prayer relates to the spiritual, and to the spiritual alone. An enlightened Christian will never, therefore, ask for any temporal blessing without conditions. If his prayer is directed to the securing of some material benefit, it will be for the purpose of working out some spiritual end. When used for spiritual ends, and only when so used, are material things in their proper place in the Divine scheme of life; and only when *meant* to be so used are they legitimate objects for request in prayer. In spiritual ends material interests are to be swallowed up and lost. It is only when we rise into this spiritual realm that we come into a circle of things where all limitations fall away, and man touches the Infinite and Eternal. Within that sphere prayer never returns void. Anyone, therefore, who in praying rises to this spiritual sphere, asking only for spiritual blessings, may be fully assured that his prayer has entered into the Divine will, and that, holding it there, while faithfully supplying the prescribed conditions, all that he desires shall find abundant fulfillment. (Page 110.)

5. THE PRAYER THAT ALWAYS PREVAILS

Let us now sum up the important truths about prayer, if it is to be genuine Christian prayer—and that means such prayer as always prevails.

(1) Prayer must be preceded by a penitence that involves the conscious effort to forsake all sin; and this penitence, if genuine and heartfelt, will find expression in confession of sin. He who comes to the mercy seat of

prayer with a broken and contrite heart will not only not be despised and driven away, but welcomed and sent away with a heart healed and happy.

(2) Prayer is the communion of two persons—of friend with friend, of parent and child with each other—such communion as constitutes the essence of happiness to those who love each other. If it were this and nothing more, it would constitute a glorious fact in Christian life and be its own sufficient reward.

(3) Prayer is petition for things desired, and, if it be truly Christian, the things that are most desired and sought are moral and spiritual blessings, though it is proper and right to make mention in prayer of whatever wants are essential to a healthful and useful life.

(4) Petitions for new blessings should be accompanied by thanksgiving for blessings already received. Nothing proves so effectively that past blessings were worthily bestowed as thanksgiving for things previously received and enjoyed. Thanksgiving is prayer; praise is prayer; thanksgiving and praise are often better than prayer in securing new blessings.

(5) Prayer must express a real desire, and the serious, earnest purpose of the person praying; it must be "with the understanding," or it is not real prayer. "Saying prayers" without thought and without feeling, no matter how appropriate the words uttered, is "vain repetition," not prayer that is heard and answered.

(6) Although in prayer the human will must be acquiescent and obedient to the Divine will, it must be an actively willing will. Only as a person praying is doing the best he can to answer his own prayers has he any right to ask Divine help. Prayer is not designed to furnish a way whereby we can get God to do what we can do and ought to do for ourselves, but a divinely appointed method

whereby we may invoke Divine aid and reënforcement in doing what we cannot do alone. It is in prayer that two partners and coworkers come together, the Divine and the human, and daily renew their covenant and plans of coöperation.

(7) An effective prayer can be offered only by a righteous man, a man who has forsaken, or at least is forsaking, all sin as far as seen and known. The value of a prayer in securing an answer from God may be expressed in these terms: it is the prayer plus or minus the character and life of the person praying.

(8) When Christ teaches his followers to say in prayer, "Our Father," he does not make prayer less personal and individual, but he does thereby inculcate the spirit of catholicity and brotherhood, and teach us that we who pray his prayer are all members of one great family, because we are children of a common Father in heaven. In prayer, therefore, we are not only communing with God but with all who have the same Father that we worship, which makes it ever fitting that we, inspired by a common and great love, should make intercession not only for ourselves but for all men everywhere.

"In the union of the Divine and the human a truly dynamic harmony is generated," says W. Arthur Hornaby. "Each needs the other in order to become thus effective. What a Divine feat of determinate counsel could never do may be done in man by the meeting and blending of the ardent desires of God and man. And this is the Gospel of prayer in its essence."¹ And with this thought we pass from the study of human prayer to the study of divine-human power.

The following verses constitute what we may call a truly spiritual prayer. Such a prayer never fails to bring

¹"Prayer and the Human Problem," p. 188.

an answer of peace and enduement with power; but to pray it means something more than to read it approvingly and to say it. It is by John Newton.

“Lord, dost thou say, Ask what thou wilt?
Then I will seize the golden hour,
And pray to be released from guilt,
And freed from sin and Satan’s power.

More of thy power to me impart;
More of thine image let me bear;
Erect thy throne within my heart,
And reign without a rival there.

Give me to know my pardon sealed,
And from thy grace to draw my strength;
Give me to see thy love revealed
In all its height and breadth and length!

Grant these requests—I ask no more,
But to thy care the rest resign;
Sick or in health, or rich or poor,
All shall be well if thou art mine.”

PART THREE
DIVINE-HUMAN POWER

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
SOME PROVIDENTIAL PATHS TO MORAL
POWER

Not until men get rid of the thought that Christianity is an expedient for saving them from suffering and pain—not until they get the grand idea of it as the great power of God present in and through the lives of men—not until then does Christianity enter upon its true trial and become ready to show what it can do.—*Phillips Brooks.*

Personality is the dominating factor, the driving force behind every enterprise, moral or spiritual, and the constructive agency in every institution that has come into being. In nations, communities, families, all that ever happens is initiated and accomplished by some superior personality.—*L. Swetenham, in "Conquering Prayer."*

Not only the power in heaven, but the power on earth belongs to Jesus Christ, a power that is inherent in the very structure and laws of our world, which are the allies of the forces of righteousness.—*William P. King, in "The Practice of the Principles of Jesus."*

If God could not be God without working always and throughout all realms, how can man ever become the being God intends if he does not release his hidden pent-up powers through worthy toil and in the very process realize whiteness and grandeur of soul?—*F. F. Shannon, in "The New Greatness."*

XIV

SOME PROVIDENTIAL PATHS TO MORAL POWER

THE value of everything may be expressed in terms of power. As is its power, so is the thing. It is the potency of the thing, its power for something, which determines the value which it possesses in its own particular sphere. Possibilities belong only to things that have power. Well-nigh everything that has power for good has also power and possibilities for evil. The capacity for good which is inherent in moral free agency carries along with it capacity for evil, for sin. Moral and spiritual powers, in so far as they are intrinsically virtuous, cannot be used for evil; when they begin to be so used, they cease to be virtuous; they become immoral, unspiritual. Nothing in the world, perhaps, is possessed of so much power for good to mankind as religion; but the religions of the world bear witness to the fact that even religion may assume such a form that it becomes a depraving and enslaving power. The one great problem of Divine providence is to turn all the forces and powers of the human race—physical, mental, and moral—into channels of virtue and righteousness without in any way destroying the moral free agency of men.

Man, wherever we find him and know him, as Henry George has truly observed, exhibits, as compared with other animals, this distinctive power—namely, he supplements what nature, what Divine providence in and through nature, has done for him by what he does for himself. His capacity is rational, regulative, educative, creative.

1. DIFFERENT KINDS OF POWER

There are three kinds of power that need to be distinguished: (1) Physical power, the power that resides in matter, or in its properties and attributes, and is designated as energy or physical force; (2) vital power, the power that resides in every living thing, life being a force different from and added to that which is physical; and (3) mental and moral power, the power that belongs to persons, to forms of life that possess rational and moral attributes, being something different from and additional to mere physical and vital force. A very small proportion of living things are persons; and an even smaller portion of the entire material universe, as we know it, is living matter which we differentiate as vegetable and animal life.

(1) Physical Force

The most universal and pervasive form of physical force or energy known is that of gravitation, by virtue of which every particle of matter attracts every other particle of matter, the amount of attracting power being determined by the respective sizes of two bodies under consideration and inversely proportioned to the square of the distance that separates the two bodies from each other. This law or force reigns throughout the material universe, and determines the location and motions of all the heavenly bodies. What are called centripetal and centrifugal forces are but modes according to which the law of gravitation works when masses of matter are in motion. The weight of things on the earth is an application of this same law.

One of the laws of matter is that heat expands and cold contracts. Water heated up to 240 degrees is turned into steam and this properly regulated becomes steam power.

Heat, applied to powder, and causing combustion and expansion, creates a power sufficient to send the massive ball of lead within the cannon many miles away on its mission of death and destruction. The latest form of physical power to be gotten out of the elements of nature and appropriated to man's uses is electricity. Combined with other forms of power it is fast revolutionizing the life of mankind. The center of the earth is known to be a mass of heated matter, and the force of that expanding heat is seen in the volcano and the earthquake. The air in motion makes the wind, and the wind moving strongly behind the sails of the ship carries it by its force across the ocean; or, combined with rain, it may make the destructive tornado. Water running down stream, or coming in from the ocean in the form of great waves, represents a most familiar form of physical power.

Wherever there is power, it can, if properly regulated, be turned into motion, or heat, or light. The amount of physical energy in the material universe remains the same. It may change its location and its form, but it cannot be increased or diminished. It may leave the sun, for example, in the form of heat and light and come to our planet, or go to other planets, but in passing from one place to another, or from one form or manifestation to another, none of it is lost. The sun is the main source of supply from which comes the physical power that makes life on our planet possible. The most fundamental fact of natural science, as seen in this continuity of force and in the uniformity of its laws of operation, is designated by the terms the "conservation of energy and correlation of forces." The new knowledge of matter into which modern science has introduced mankind has brought to light the fact that every single atom of matter, instead of being an indivisible unit, is an aggregation of fast-moving

protons and electrons that represent an immense power which may yet, when better understood, be released and harnessed and utilized in many ways for the service of mankind.

(2) *Vital Force*

There is, again, the force which we call life. It is something halfway, as it were, between the force inhering in matter and its properties and the force belonging to personality. Matter, lifeless matter, is inert—that is, a mass of matter, if static, will remain as it is until some force moves it; or, if it be in motion, it will continue moving until some resisting force of some kind opposes and stops it. But life, a seed of life, getting into a mass or form of matter, begins to do wonders utterly impossible before.

Two sturdy oak trees are out in front of my window. A half century ago two small acorns were buried in the sod out there. Because they had a seed of life in them, they each went to work to build a tree; and now two strong and sturdy oaks, fifty years old, are out there in my yard. What a wonderful and splendid work that something in them called life has done, directing the forces that have been carrying out of the soil and out of the air the chemical food these trees have needed to make them live and grow great and strong. Are they still growing? One is, the other is not. Yesterday the lightning struck one of them and killed it; life is gone out of it, and with its departure all the wonderful and complicated work that has been going on for fifty years instantly ceased; and now decay awaits it; while the other, just like it to all appearances, is going to continue growing upward and downward, outward and inward, it may be for a century or more to come. Whatever else life may or may not be, it is something possessed of marvelous powers. If we

could only understand what life is in the tiny flowers that cling to the crannied wall, we could understand what God and man is, so wrote Tennyson:

“Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies.
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower. But, if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.”

Consider, again, what this life power means to the animal—how in the stomach, with its digestive organs, we have provided the power house of the living organism, and how with heart and arteries, and lungs and liver, and muscles and nerves, and bones and flesh, and other organs too numerous to name, the functions of life are carried on with a complexity of machinery and a regularity and efficiency of service that no machine ever constructed by the genius and skill of man has equaled. But physical life itself is not a living unit, but manifold. There are myriads of little life cells in every living body of matter, and within and through these life cells what are known as protoplasts operate, moving ceaselessly along the blood vessels, as if they were canals, carrying on ever the work of construction and repair. We marvel at the strength that is represented in the body of the horse and the power exhibited by the trained athlete. But let life depart out of these organisms and all that horse power, or man power, is instantly gone. We are told that all the many physical elements that enter into the human body could be bought in the drug store for ninety-eight cents. But who can tell us how to put those elements together so as to make life not only begin to be, but to put forth the marvelous powers that always accompany it, whether it be in vegetable or animal form? Who can tell us what life is? What is the secret of its power?

(3) Intellectual and Moral Power

This third form of power belongs only to such living beings as are possessed of a rational and moral nature. The mind represents intellectual force. We say, and say truly, that knowledge is power. In the same way rational and moral beings have emotional power; and there is no force in the universe greater than love. Paul, in writing to Timothy, identifies the spirit of power with "the spirit of love and of a sound mind." But even more than by intellect and emotion, more than through thought and feeling, rational beings have power through the exercise of their free wills and volitions. It is from the conscious exercise of free will—putting forth volitions that cause things to come to pass in the physical realm—that man comes to know what power is. With an act of his will he causes his body to move; with a volition he causes his hand to lift a weight in the air. It is mind and will moving matter. As living matter is something different from and more powerful than lifeless matter, so living beings that are rational are different from and greater than all living things that lack reason. Intellectual, emotional, and volitional power is the highest form of energy because it can control and utilize the physical and vital forces of nature for the accomplishment of its own ends. The gun, with its powder and projectile within, represents power; but what this power will accomplish depends, relatively, more upon the man behind the gun than upon the gun. It is the *morale* of the soldiers—the mind and heart and will power of the two contending armies—which, other things being equal, will most surely determine the issue of the battle. The highest form of personal power is moral and spiritual power. In the realm of providence and prayer, then, we shall find that the power that belongs to per-

sons reaches its highest expression and finds its noblest manifestation.

There are many other forms of power with which we are familiar, some of these single and some composite. Thus money is a great power, and this is shown not only in its power for good, but also in the fact that it is "a root of all evil." It is that kind of power that men always and everywhere desire most of all to possess. It is the purchasing power of money that gives it its value. There, again, is official power which some men crave even more than money. Most of the wars of the world have been caused either by greed or by the ambition of men for authority and power which would enable them to compel their fellow men to serve them. Then we talk of the power of the parent, the power of the pulpit, the power of the press, the power of the teacher, the power of passion, the "powers of darkness," the power of sin and Satan, the power of righteousness, the power of the world to come—the significance and value of well-nigh all these and other things can be expressed in terms of power. Even God himself is conceived of in most religions as Power. In many of them this power is a thing of magic. The religion of the Bible alone has interpreted Divine Power as personal, spiritual, and ethical.

2. PROBATION AND POWER

Probation is not only a necessary precedent of, but a providential pathway to, power. For, if test and temptation be met and overcome, they prove to be paths to power. An untried soul may be innocent, but he cannot be strong. God's presence and gracious help are never more freely offered to men than when, in the natural course of life and the discharge of duty, they are called upon to undergo trial and temptation. Even our divine-human

Lord, faultless in character and conduct as he was, yet is said to have been made perfect through suffering. It was after the great temptation which he underwent that it is said of him that he "returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit." Investment of men with free agency and putting them on probation is but another name for developing personality and power through test and temptation. With every temptation which is attributable to Divine providence, there is a way provided not only to escape, but to overcome and triumph; and not only to come out conqueror, but more than conqueror. This is one path to power that all men must travel; and, like all things worth while in life, the possibility of power and blessedness carries along with it the possibility and peril of moral loss, impotence, and death.

Although God created us without our aid, and redeemed us without our aid, he does not save us without our coöperation. God makes planets and continents and mountains and oceans without their aid, but whenever a man is made, the man himself has to participate in the making. In this joint work we are sure of God's doing his part; the uncertain element that enters into the problem is the part that the man himself performs. This is because man is a free agent and under test and probation. Capacity is a gift, but moral and personal power is an achievement, something attained through the coöperation of the creature and his Creator.

To affirm that power comes to men through and from limitation, opposition, and obstacles sounds like a paradox, but it is true—true, indeed, in the physical as well as in the spiritual world. The power of Niagara is due to its waters being limited by the rock-ribbed banks that confine them; spread out over broad acres these waters would represent anything else but power. The

steam engine has its power only because its steam is confined. The power of the cannon to send its huge and heavy projectile across miles of space is because the powder is confined. Money has power in its purely physical and commercial realm, but many a boy's riches have ruined him, while the restrictions and limitations which the poor boy's poverty have imposed on him have, in cases without number, been the making of a great man. To let a youth have his wishes all gratified without any restrictions is to start him on the road to ruin; nor will it take him long to reach the fatal goal on that alluring but treacherous road. Such a road as that—the pathway of pleasure and self-indulgence—is a veritable death valley to all who travel it, so far as the higher moral and spiritual life is conceived. "Give me standing room," said one of old, "and I will move the world." The ladder up which most men who have "moved the world" have had to climb has rested on the rock of poverty, and they have had to climb through toil and self-denial and contend against difficulties innumerable. But they refused to turn back. It was because of the difficulties which they contended with and overcame that they reached the heights.

Power to overcome difficulties, not the removal of difficulties, is God's providential method of making strong men. Faith in Divine providence and the most faithful use of the high privilege of prayer will not remove difficulties and perplexities from our lives—indeed, it may be that, all the more because of our faith in providence and our confidence in prayer, the difficulties and perplexities of life may confront and baffle us. But the faith and love, the confidence and courage that have power to surmount and overcome, are qualities that belong only to those who believe in Divine providence and the efficacy of prayer. To inspire and develop moral and spiritual power that

can overcome difficulties is an achievement far greater than the elimination and removal of all the difficulties and perplexities that beset life's pathway. Providence and prayer will not remove the cross, but will give us something better—power to bear it—and this in part by showing us how Christ bore his cross, and by developing the Christ-spirit and the Christ-power as a victorious principle and possession within us. Pain and suffering in body and mind they will not and cannot remove; but they can and will generate and quicken a divine-human power within us which is more than conqueror over these things. And when faith and love, confidence and courage that are founded on providence and prayer, have won the victory at the supreme point of their trial and have established themselves as ruling qualities of the soul they “will turn themselves back upon life as a whole, will interpenetrate everything with their spiritual energy and transfigure everything with their radiance, and raise all things else to their own high level, and thus fill the world with music and beauty and joy.”

The essence and glory of the Christian religion—the method and purpose of Divine providence—are not revealed in giving its votaries a good and easy time by smoothing and simplifying life's pathway, thus keeping them down on the low levels of moral mediocrity and spiritual weakness, but are designed rather to lift them up to life's high moral and spiritual levels by forcing them to face and surmount trials and difficulties, which to heroic souls always become stepping-stones to that quality and kind of power which is the goal of a great personality.

This is what religion of the right type will do for us. It will give us power, hard earned though it be, rather than easy satisfaction; at least whatever satisfaction it brings will come through the attainment and pos-

session of power. It will not shut our eyes to the evil in the world; but it will increase immensely our resources for dealing with evil when seen. A power in the world which is forever on the side of those who are brave enough to trust it, causing all things to work together for their ultimate moral and spiritual good and making them conquerors, and more than conquerors over whatever confronts them, whether in life or in death—this, and nothing less than this, is what, under the providence of an all-wise and all-good God, we have to expect and to ask for. Our mistake is not that we have asked for too much in our prayers, but that we have asked for and expected too little.¹

In writing concerning "the way to peace and power" Bertha Condé says:

Out of our limitations God will burst in triumphant power, if we accept them as the starting point for his miracle working. A blind man may have his dominant desire for sight answered through the prayer of faith and live as a witness to the touch of God. Or he may be like the blind Milton, enduring physical darkness in order that the eyes of his mind might see the spiritual land of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. The same power of God may deliver a man from jail and give him a new chance for growth, or he may find in jail the quiet retreat in which to write "*Pilgrim's Progress*," as did Bunyan. With God nothing is impossible; but the closer we come in our relationship with divine love the more we shall pray the prayer of Jesus: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." The divine power will be seen not only in uncounted replies to our cries of need, but in a lifelong process wherein, as the years go by, we shall discern a mysterious but personal guidance and one which will humble our hearts.

Many people have been transformed in their characters by unanswered prayer. There is an added power and intensity which we would never have except for the discipline of delay. If the river of our desire flowed on without interruption, we would soon become shallow and

¹See L. P. Jack's "Religious Perplexities," to which volume we are indebted for much that appears here in our presentation of this thought.

sluggish. Delay and hindrance build a dam in the river, and the higher the wall the greater the power we gather in flowing over it. The power thus stored up for future release can be harnessed to vast projects and bless multitudes of people. Thus the delay that comes to the waters is in itself the answer of power. The life of nearly every great man or woman speaks eloquently of such experiences.¹

There are some rights which, though they be real rights, we have a right to surrender, and other rights we have no right to surrender. The latter are moral and spiritual rights; these we must assert and hold on to, as our highest and best intellectual and moral development are involved in them, and our highest usefulness depends on our maintaining them. But the other rights pertain mostly to things of a lower order or lesser value—to money and preferment and recognition and the honor that may be due us, and to such like things. These we not only may surrender, in part at least, but it often happens that by surrendering them and leaving these matters to others or to take care of themselves, we gain in moral and spiritual power and influence. Unselfishness and generosity within reasonable limits in matters of creature comfort, if accompanied by a firm grasp on things of the spirit, are among the pathways to moral and spiritual power.

Great as is the purchasing power of money, there are some things that "money cannot buy," and this can only be because these other things have an intrinsic value and power of their own greater than that of money. Gen. Robert E. Lee after the close of the Civil War was offered a salary of fifty thousand dollars or more per annum by an insurance company if he would consent to become its president and allow his name and fame to be commercialized and used by the company in a way to make money. He refused, saying he wanted to work for and with the

¹"The Way to Peace, Health, and Power," pp. 192 and 195.

young men of the South who had fought with him in that awful struggle and were now moneyless and poverty-stricken. They needed to be educated, and he gave his life to this work as president of Washington and Lee University at a salary of only fifteen hundred dollars. America has never produced a man more honored and beloved than Robert E. Lee. A modest, humble, self-effacing Christian man of spotless life, his character was pure gold. There was "the hiding of his power." Money is great, but manhood is greater. Every man may have his price, but there are some things that money cannot buy. "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Thus spake Jehovah in the days of Isaiah, and through his providence he has been working ever since, and not in vain, to make that promise true. Out of the American Civil War two great men emerged, and when the smoke of battle was gone all men on both sides saw their greatness—they were Lincoln and Lee. On one occasion in the dark days of awful stress and struggle Lincoln said: "I am not so much concerned to get God on our side as I am to be sure that we are on God's side." The greatness of these men, "the hiding of their power," was neither civil nor military greatness. Pagan Rome, in many respects the mightiest civil government the world has ever seen, with all her power, never produced men like these.

"The last great gift of pagan Rome to the world," says Dr. F. W. Gunsaulus, in his "Paths to Power," "was a Cæsar, her characteristic man, the man up through whose personality and power Roman thought and feeling climbed, as in a tower, toward the infinite, until, in that desperate but blind effort to bridge the distance between the human and the Divine, it called Cæsar 'God.' Apotheosis was the logical result in man's mind of an effort at

civilization unfed by the Highest. It could end in nothing else than making a man into a god, and it was in this way, through its very failure, a testimony to the fact that God must speak in and through the Incarnation, wherein man would come to God, or, rather, God would come to man."

It is in personality, personality that is moral and spiritual and altruistic and self-forgetting, that the power of the Christian religion finds its truest and highest expression.

3. PERSONALITY AND POWER

WHEN God in history has intended that his truth should press notably on with power, says Dr. Newman Smyth, he has put that truth first in a single soul, and the man with that one idea from heaven inspiring him has become the prophet, the reformer, the apostle. But God intends that his truth should be always pressing on, and there is no age when he is not using the best men and women available for his providential and progressive work. St. Francis of Assisi once said: "Every man is just so great as he is in the eyes of God—and no greater." Judged by this standard, many who are unknown to fame and to the historians of earth doubtless have a high place in the honor list the recording angels are keeping and in high Heaven's "hall of fame."

"Religious power has certain striking traits," says Dr. E. S. Brightman in his volume titled "Religious Values." "In common with all power, it makes a new future possible for the person. That new future may not be a control of environment or of bodily disease, but perhaps something more valuable—the control of inner attitude. Since the power that religion imparts is not mechanical but personal, not coercive but coöperative, it is an original experience, a liberation of the soul. "Where is the

thoughtful man to-day," asks Sabatier, "who has not felt within himself a veiled Presence and Force much greater than his own? What worker in a lofty cause has not perceived within his own personal activity, and saluted with a feeling of deep veneration, the mysterious activity of a universal and eternal Power?" Dr. Harris E. Kirk, writing of Christianity as preëminently "The Religion of Power," says:

Christianity is original simply because it is a religion of power. The function of a power is the characteristic mode of operation. The Christian life is divinely originated, but its growth depends in part upon the coöperation of man with God, and our ability to work intelligently with God is conditioned by our knowledge of the functions of the power of God. The more we know of the habits and characteristic modes of that tremendous spiritual dynamic working in the individual experience, the greater is the benefit to be derived from its activities. . . . The strength of the believer is determined by the degree in which he understands the power working in his experience. By thinking out the ultimate meaning of experience in the light of its functional implications the believer comes to know the power of God in his thought and life.

There is perhaps no way in which the power that comes from the union of Divine providence and human prayer can be better seen and studied than in the lives of those who represent in a notable way and in a more than ordinary degree the power of personality—those whose power is not physical, or due to favoring fortune, but moral and spiritual. In some of the sacred spiritual biographies that have been recorded for our admonition and encouragement we can see "the hiding of their power" in the experience of those who were especially eminent for piety, unselfishness, and service to their fellows—and this is the kind of power we are here considering. It is a power found only in those who had a vision of God, and heard God speak, and answered his call, entering into communion with him and relating their lives to him more closely and continuously than did other men.

There comes to us at once, as to the writer of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, a list of worthies too innumerable even to name, the study of whom could leave no doubt as to the secret of their strength and influence being found in the moral and spiritual power they had because of their vision of God and their faith in his providential guidance of their lives—a guidance possible only because of their seeking to know and do his will. We select only a few, and these from Biblical history, to show what we mean by personality and power as related to providence and prayer. Towering above all others that we name will be Moses and Paul. With a study of these two men alone we would be willing to leave the question as to whether providence and prayer are or are not a real power in men's lives. But they do not stand alone; indeed, but for what others were and did before them, they, good and great as they were, could never have been.

(1) *Some Old Testament Examples of Personal Power*

How very faulty some of these human instruments of providence were, cannot fail to arrest early the attention of the devout reader of the Old Testament. How strange that men so weak and wavering should ever have come to be men of power and of large and lasting influence! But this, while it may perplex and mystify us, has a comforting side, for it shows us that, even though we be weak and fall very far below perfection in character and conduct, we may still be children of providence and prayer. Men of ancient times need to be judged—if we are to do them justice—by the moral standards and ideals of the age in which they lived. If Abraham be judged in the light of the day and country in which he lived, his response to the call of God to leave his polytheistic surroundings, and the devotion with which he maintained through a long

life his friendship for and with God, furnish a noble example of a providential and prayerful life. Think of what the world owes to Abraham and find if you can the explanation of his far-reaching influence. It is easily found; whatever else may or may not enter into the explanation, the most potent cause was this: providence and prayer made him the man he was; he believed in God, and he was a man of prayer.

And there was Jacob, the wily and scheming supplanter, deceiving his father and cheating his brother, and even in his dealings with God we find him driving a close and selfish *quid pro quo* bargain with his Maker—can providence and prayer become a factor and power in the life of such a man? If they can, there is hope for every man. And they did. Read the account of that night at Bethel when in his dreams—and it matters not whether such dreams are night dreams or day dreams for the moral and spiritual influence they have on one's life—he saw the angels of God ascending and descending. "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not." But he found out that God was indeed there, and he then and there entered into a communion and lifelong copartnership with him which, though followed by many falterings and marred by many serious faults on his part, was not only never severed, but was followed by another and even richer experience in meeting the Angel of Jehovah at the Jabbok ford and wrestling with him all night in prayer, saying as the night wore on, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me"—and all this with such importunity as never fails to prevail in prayer. So successful was that encounter with God that the supplanter was transformed into Israel, the Prince of God.

"The significance of this Jabbok ford incident," says Bishop H. M. Du Bose, "was that it was here that the

prayer struggles of Jacob brought not only his own soul into the light, but became a precedent for millions of human souls that elsewhere have travailed in the flesh to attain the life of spiritual power and witness. The vision at Bethel had its culmination and fulfillment in the night vision at Peniel. It was here that the patriarch cast off selfish motive and fleshly pride and entered with a new name and with new motives into the consciousness of the divine life."¹

And then comes that petted and spoiled child of Jacob — Joseph, son of the much-loved Rachel. I very much doubt whether this self-conscious and conceited youth ever would have amounted to much but for the outrageous wrong done him by his jealous brethren. That brought him to his senses and threw him upon God, and his very misfortunes and wrongs were providentially overruled for his good and for the good of those who had so grievously wronged him. It is a familiar story how he became a man of power, a very savior to his people, an instrument of providence.

In no better way than by studying the character and career of a man like Moses can we show that the making of a great spiritual personality and the entrance into the world of a man with a message and a providential mission are as a rule the result of a vision of God such as is given in some unique and impressive experience that cannot be mistaken for or confused with accident. The personality of Moses came to be seen and felt only when he had a vision of God; the vision that came to him in the arid Arabian desert when he saw the bush that burned but was not consumed; and he not only saw, but he heard. This experience was the preparation for and the beginning of a great career.

¹In the *Christian Advocate*.

Nothing can be more true than that the power with which Moses appeared before the King of Egypt and commanded him in the name of Jehovah, saying, "Let my people go," found its origin and inspiration in that memorable experience with God in the desert. When God first appeared to him and asked him what that was that he held in hand, he replied, "A rod, my rod"—it was just such a simple rod as any shepherd carried. That was before the experience at the burning bush; but after that experience, giving him such a vision of God as he had never had before, he is represented as going forth, not with "a rod" in his hand, but, mark the change, with "the rod of God" in his hand. Unless that rod had been transformed into the "rod of God" we would never have heard of wonders being wrought in Egypt by the hand of Moses.

It was because Moses saw Him who was invisible that he had the power to endure; and, if ever there was a time when a man needed to be invested with "enduring power," it was when Moses started on his long and checkered career as the leader of the children of Israel. But the impressive feature of this incident in the life of Moses is that he had a vision of God, and by means of a visible burning bush he came to see and know God the Invisible—a vision and a faith that stayed with him, and made him able to endure when there was no longer a burning bush for him to see. The communion with God which took place at the burning bush and the lesson he learned through the transformation of his rod into "the rod of God" abided with him through all the momentous years that followed. God gives men extraordinary experiences in order that, after thus getting a clear vision of him, they may see him in the ordinary experiences and events of life. It was because Moses came to see God the Invisible, the God of providence, that he was endued with enduring power.

"When Moses said with sincere self-scrutiny, 'Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?' he was weighing and comparing Pharaoh's personality with his own. Pharaoh and I—one was in the scale against the other, and it seemed an unequal contest. God answered Moses. Another personal pronoun, 'I,' fell upon the air. It was the 'I' of Almighty God. God said: 'Certainly I'—I love that 'certainly' of God—'certainly I will be with thee.' The 'I' of Moses was lifted and lost sight of, at least for one revealing moment, in the 'I' of the God of Israel. How decidedly was Moses delivered from himself! Hear him now. A new question has come up in his mind; the old one about himself has gone. The emphasis of the enterprise is not now placed upon himself at all. His lesser 'I' has vanished; the omniscient 'I' alone is sovereign and important. . . . Every soul passes through these experiences with God, if that soul is on the way to power."¹

One of the greatest examples of moral and spiritual power embodied in a personality in all history is to be found in Isaiah, equally great as a prophet, poet, preacher, and writer. Old Testament literature reaches its high-water mark in the book that bears his name. It is not difficult to find the secret of his inspiration and of his moral and spiritual power. We do well to let him tell about it in his own vivid way:

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one

¹Frank W. Gunsaulus, "Paths to Power," p. 49.

of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here I am; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, etc.

This narrative of personal experience needs no comment. Here is everything that should characterize a covenant between God and man. Here God's providence is at its best because he has the finest type of personality to work upon and through. Here moral and spiritual personality is at its best because the consecration of the man to God and to the service of his fellow men is complete; it is entire consecration, both intensively and extensively. God's power was placed at the command of this man of vision and prayer, and he tapped the Divine resources of power and drew on them richly for all his needs.

(2) Some New Testament Examples of Personal Power

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John." And he lived and preached after a manner in every way worthy of a God-sent man. Only such a stern man as he was could meet the needs of that day. But God allowed him to be imprisoned and beheaded. How can such a thing be in the providence of an all-wise and all-good and all-powerful God? Did not the Master say that not even a tiny sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice? If this be true, men ask, ought he not to have saved John the Baptist, the divinely sent forerunner of the Messiah, from Herod's cruel, guilt-stained and death-dealing hands? How men miss the point! They fail to note that the sparrow *fell—fell in death*. So, too, God was looking on when John the Baptist died, not approving, but ready and waiting to over-

rule the murder of this innocent, holy, and heroic man for his good and his glory. Who of the two, Herod or John, is now behind imprisoning bars that will never be broken while time lasts? It is Herod, and not John. And who is on the throne, on a pulpit of power, ruling over men and inspiring them to do their duty though they go down to death? It is John; God's overruling providence placed him there. And was he not a man of prayer? Surely he was, because we are told that John's prayers were known to the disciples of Christ and prompted them to make that appeal to the Master which called forth from him that most valuable and spiritual asset of the Christian religion, the "Lord's Prayer." And was it not John's death, and the like, that called forth James Russell Lowell's memorable words:

"Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows,
Keeping watch above his own."

The judgments of time are inexorably moral. Truth, if it be crushed to earth, is sure to rise again.

The pathetic and tragic death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, casts a lurid light upon a young man named Saul, standing over against the young martyr and leader of the zealots who stoned him. Bold and resolute as Paul seemed to be in making havoc of the early Christians, the sequel proved that impressions were made upon him by the spirit, the speech, and the death of Stephen that were not only the beginning of his conversion, but were to exercise a remarkable influence over his life and his manner of thought. The Church owes the conversion of Paul to the death of Stephen—to the spirit and demeanor and prayer of the man as he died. It was an

object well worth dying for, to have such a convert as Saul. And it is an interesting fact, which has been noted by a profound student of the Pauline literature and theology, that Paul made it his one great work in life after his conversion to carry out in his writings and speeches the leading thought of Stephen's speech. He made that speech to be, as it were, the outline and program of his own message and work in the Church and the world. In other words, the keynote of Paul's theology is found in the dying speech of St. Stephen. The picture of that serene, sweet-spirited, and heroic man falling asleep amid the stones that covered his bruised and broken body followed the young disciple of Gamaliel as, "breathing out slaughter and vengeance," he hastened away across the desert to make havoc of the Christians at Damascus.

Only a man who combined in himself (1) Hebrew ancestry and faith, and a deeply religious home training; (2) free Roman citizenship with all its privileges; (3) all the best education and culture that could be obtained in Greek and Hebrew schools; (4) a personality embodying robust physical manhood, intellectual vigor and learning, sterling moral character, and undaunted courage; also (5) a genuine religious experience that was so powerfully impressive that it could leave not the shadow of a doubt as to its genuineness and its origin in the vision of a risen, divine-human Christ who was Lord of life and death; and (6) a prayer life in which the dominant desire of his heart is for things spiritual, and in which all things material have but a small place—only a man combining all these qualifications for leadership could possibly have met the needs of the providential epoch and opportunity in history which Paul was called to meet, and which he so fully met that, led by his divine Lord and accompanied by his

fellow apostles, he and they made of it the greatest era in all human history.

It was Paul's experience, his experimental knowledge of Christ, that made him the personal power and dynamic force he was in the founding of the Christian Church and in the propagation of the Christian religion. I like much some things which two of my colleagues have written concerning the personality, and the power, and the far-reaching influence of this great apostle to the Gentiles. In his "Story of the New Testament" Professor Thomas Carter says: "Paul makes three statements: 'I have learned . . . I know . . . I can do!' His spirit has been under the educative process, and the fruits of a true culture appear in that he has studied in the school of Christ, caught his spirit, and acquired his power. . . . God's great purpose was not to make a preacher or a polemic or a pastor out of Paul, but a large-hearted, majestic man." It was because of the truth embodied in these words that Paul learned the "dynamic source" of the believer's life and became himself a typical believer and a providential instrument for transmitting to others the spiritual power which he received from Christ. In his volume, titled "Paul's Doctrine of Redemption," Professor H. B. Carré says: "The life of the believer, according to Paul, has its dynamic source in a cosmic power, or personality—namely, Christ. In this cosmic life-giving power, which caused him to live again, the believer lives in unison with God's great world-purpose, and becomes the dispenser of God's power for the ends of redemption."

The personality of Paul has rarely if ever been portrayed by any writer in brief compass more impressively than by Dr. Fairbairn in his "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," and some of his words describing Paul's provi-

dential mission in the establishment and propagation of the Christian religion are as follows:

Paul starts as a Jew, a zealot in the Jews' religion, but, becoming a disciple of the Jesus he had persecuted, he is driven by a logic which is not so much his servant as his master, to preach among the Gentiles the faith of which he had once made havoc. We may describe him as the most unintelligible of men to the analytical reason of a critic who has never warmed to the passion or been moved by the enthusiasm of humanity; but he is the most intelligible of men to the man who has heard within himself the sound of all the voices that speak in man. He is a Jew, proud of his blood, but ashamed of its hot intolerance; a convert who finds in his conversion the meaning of his own and his people's past; a brother who would die for his brethren, yet holds a faith which exposes him to sufferings worse than death at their hands; a kinsman disowned of his own kin, who could not then forgive, and have never been able since to forgive, his desertion of their tribal banner and his contempt for their racial vanity, though he has done more than any other son of their fathers to redeem their name from its worst vices and shed upon it a more beneficent light than streams from the Ghetto or the Exchange. He is a man who despises life, yet endures all things that he may save men from death; a person without sentiment, yet of the most commanding affection, mixing with the most obscure and illiterate, yet speaking to them with the courtesy which ought to be cultivated by the sons of God; a man hated, hunted, persecuted, denied the comforts of home, the cheer and the joy of woman's love, the tenderness and trust of children he could call his own, yet writing the grandest words in praise of love which ever came from human pen; a man who was mean outwardly, yet inwardly endowed with such strength as to lift the solid earth of religious custom, prejudice, and convention from off its axis.

Not while men are yet living can we always see how great they are as instruments of providence and progress in advancing the kingdom of God. In real life great gains are made so slowly they are often unrecognized, and there are some things which seem to us to be loss and defeat to God's providential plans; but time shows it is not so. The death of Stephen at the hands of religious zealots was one of these events, and the death of Paul at the hands of Nero. "In real life," says Dr. Harry E. Fosdick, "Nero sits on the throne and Paul languishes in

prison; and many years must pass before people begin calling their dogs Nero and their sons Paul. But that time comes; and, as God lives, that time will always come."

Is it a mere accident that the two most creative, constructive, and influential characters, respectively, in Old and New Testament history are, intellectually, the best educated and most thoroughly equipped men of which we have any account in the sacred writings? God's providence often makes use of ignorant and unlearned men and accomplishes a great work through humble and weak instrumentalities; but he also uses those who are possessed of strong intellects and much learning, and it is through these last that the greatest work is accomplished. Christ called a group of unlearned and ignorant fishermen of Galilee into his service and trained them in his own personal peripatetic school; and they are reported to have "turned the world upside down" in the Galilean villages where they preached. But he also called to his service one educated disciple of Gamaliel, and this one man, when soundly converted and baptized with the Holy Ghost, went forth and, by God's gracious blessing on his learning and zeal, did more to spread the gospel of Christ throughout the world than all the unlettered fishermen put together, so far as the New Testament records the results of their labors. If God has no need of human learning, he has much less need of human ignorance.

Faith in providence and the right use of prayer cannot fail to make strong men; but it is only when God has men of power, men who are strong intellectually, morally, and spiritually, that he does his greatest and best work. All history is a witness to this truth.

Is anything in the entire range of religious biography more pathetic than that Moses, the greatest personality in the history of Israel, should, in the providence

of God, have been permitted only to see and not to enter the "promised land" to which he had led his people, and that Paul, the greatest human personality in New Testament history, should have to spend his last days in a Roman dungeon? If this, our first thought, tends to call in question and limit either the wisdom, or the goodness, or the power of God as his providence dealt with these two great souls, our second and more sober thought is that each of these men was glorified in the way and by the circumstances under which he died. For on this dark background of pathos in the one case, and of tragedy in the other, their characters shine with a resplendent radiance and a potency of influence which would have been impossible if they had ended their days in the full enjoyment of the peace and honor which they seem to us so richly to have deserved.

Nothing is more precious in the sight of God than the suffering and death of his saints. It is just here that faith, real faith in God, comes in and shows itself. However it may seem to the blindfold eyes of unbelievers, to believers God's power is never more present and impressive and precious than when, launching out into the deep through the gates of death, they are called on to sail the pathless and uncharted sea whose mysterious depths no man has ever fathomed. If the flight of the waterfowl in the high air overhead revealed to a poet and man of letters the presence of a beneficent Power in and over animate nature, a thousandfold more in the passing of a great personality like Moses or Paul into the life beyond may we be assured that God is keeping watch over his own. Happy is the man, be he poet, or prophet, or apostle, who in facing duty, or danger, or death, can find, alike in the fall at his feet of a tiny sparrow, or in the far flight of the solitary wild

fowl, a symbol of God's never-failing love and care and guidance. Singing with William Cullen Bryant, he can say, and never be disappointed in saying:

"There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.]"

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright."

"Religion," says Rufus M. Jones, "is the power of God manifested in human life. It is a power, a force, just as real and just as persistent as that which we call gravitation, and its effects are just as sure. No definitions of electricity would ever light a man's house or move a trolley car. The first step is to let the current in, and the house becomes light, or the car moves. Everything bases itself on the ultimate, invisible power, which is simply received. A religion without power would be like a gravitation which did not draw anything, or like electricity that had no force. Religion is spiritual gravitation. It draws the soul away from everything else to its true Central Sun."

Changing this figure of speech and citing another analogy between the natural and the spiritual world, we may say that just as the streams that furnish the water power of the world all come from fountains hid in the heart of the hills or at the foot of the mountains, so it is with the fountain of spiritual power. It is in the secret place of the Most High; in the closet where man communes with God; in the solitary and sacred place where the finite spirit comes, as it were, face to face with the infinite Spirit. Let us find now, if we can, this fountain and storehouse of moral and spiritual power.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
THE ATTAINMENT AND USE OF SPIRITUAL
POWER

Man is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. Man *is* God's method. With God the man counts for everything. The man and his spiritual character is what God is looking after. But it is men of prayer and power that God needs for his work. It is the praying heart that sanctifies the toil and skill of the hands and the toil and wisdom of the head. Prayer keeps work in the line of God's will and keeps thought in the line of God's word. The hands of praying men with clear heads and loving hearts only can build effectively for God. They are God's mighty ones on earth; they are his master-builders. They build not only for time, but for eternity.—See "*Purpose in Prayer*," by E. M. Bounds.

Wherever the spirit of Christ is, a dynamic force operates, and it operates invariably to one end. It reconciles men to God and to each other. Wherever a Christian lives, Christ lives; and he lives as a revealing Personality, to show the world that God is Father and men are brothers. As men come under these relations, they are saved; and as the world comes under this spirit, it becomes Christ's kingdom.—James I. Vance, in "*Forbid Him Not*."

True prayer is man's loving response to the love of God; and since Divine Love expressed itself in a supreme act of self-giving, nothing short of a generous and unreserved act of self-giving on the part of man can constitute a worthy response. Prayer is not a spiritual romance or a psychic dream, but an act of devotion, influencing the very depth of the soul, permeating the whole life, and shaping every action.—Mrs. E. Herman, in "*Creative Prayer*."

XV

THE ATTAINMENT AND USE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

ACCORDING to an ancient Greek myth, fire, the instrument and symbol of power, was held in heaven by the gods as their peculiar possession, something that was not to be placed in the hands of men. There were among the mighty Titans—so the story goes—two brothers named Prometheus (forethought) and Epimetheus (afterthought). Prometheus one day rashly did the forbidden deed and brought down fire from heaven to earth. For this offense against the divine order he was bound and chained to Mount Caucasus, and a vulture was sent to prey upon his vitals every day. Æschylus, the Greek poet, tells the tragic story of how Prometheus was bound and suffered, and how, when he was later released by Heracles, he returned to Olympus. Whatever of “divine fire” Prometheus brought down from heaven to earth has long since died out; it disappeared long ago while the age of myths was still in existence.

But there is another who brought down fire, real divine fire, from heaven to earth, and it was not forbidden, but approved by the God of heaven, and he lived in the days of Pontius Pilate and of the Cæsars. He was not a “Titan,” but came of the seed of Abraham and was a Prince in the house of David. He, too, suffered for the deed he did, but it was at the hands of men and not by the orders of an offended Deity. Released by death, he ascended and returned, not to Olympus, but to the heavenly places; and one day, when a band of his followers, gathered out of every nation under heaven, were engaged

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mightily in prayer, he sent down the fire from heaven. It appeared in the mystic form of "cloven tongues, and sat upon each of them," and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak, each in his own tongue, as the Spirit gave them utterance." That day is known as Pentecost and is notable as the day when the fire came down from God to men, and from that day to the present time that fire, the symbol of heat and light and power, has never died out upon the altars of earth where holy men are engaged in prayer. This is the "power," the attainment and use of which we are now considering.

1. THE DIVINE HIDING AND HUMAN FINDING OF POWER

"The hiding of power" is an expression used by the prophet Habakkuk and is suggestive of a very interesting fact concerning power, whether it be physical, vital, or personal—namely, that it is generally hidden, something out of sight. The power of gravity—how silent and invisible it is in its ordinary and regular operations! The subterranean powers of the earth occasionally manifest themselves in earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, but as a rule they are silent and hidden. The electric currents that reside in the earth and air are occasionally displayed in the thunder and lightning and the aurora borealis, but most of the time they are hidden and silent. The deep-moving waves of the ocean and the mighty volumes of water in the great river are visible, but they hide their power. The locomotive that is standing hitched to the train of cars at the station has immense power confined and harnessed within, but it is hidden out of sight. The power in the dynamo and storage battery is something out of sight. The power locked up in the ton of coal is great, but we cannot see it. So invisible is the power in the atoms of matter that, although the whirling protons

and electrons within them are the very concentrated essence of physical and chemical energy, we cannot see it. Whenever we find any object in the vast physical universe, we are safe in pointing to it and saying, There, also, is the hiding of power.

Equally silent and hidden, too, is the power represented by life. How noiselessly and invisibly are the life forces at work in all the trees and shrubs and flowers around us and in the living, moving bodies of animals about us. We see them, but the power that is ceaselessly at work within them—we see it not. And think of what force is represented in the ceaseless beating of our own hearts, without which moving force within we could not live a moment—and yet how hidden it all is! “I will praise thee, O Lord,” said the Psalmist, “for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

The man of intellectual strength, whose mind is stored with full and accurate knowledge, also has in him the hiding of a power that does not belong to the unlearned and ignorant man, but it does not exploit and exhibit itself. The passing stranger who may converse with him may not see or hear aught that reveals the power which his vast stores of knowledge represent. The man of partial and superficial knowledge, possessed, as he himself well knows, of little or nothing that can be called learning, is often loud or bold, displaying more brass than brains and unwittingly betraying his ignorance when he thinks he is displaying knowledge. But the man of real learning, the great scholar, the scientist who knows fully the facts of his science, the man who is master of his specialty—all such are men of power; but they are modest, and are humbled by the consciousness of how much they do not know as compared with what they do know. It is not the orator who empties himself, who uses up and exhibits all

his knowledge and oratorical powers, that pleases most his audience, but rather the speaker whose hearers see that he has in reserve yet deeper and larger stores of knowledge and yet greater powers of speech than he has used. It is the "hiding of power" in the man that most profoundly impresses and pleases, sending his hearers away with the feeling that he has not done his utmost and best, that there is more and better matter in store for further use, hidden and reserve power that awaits release when called for on some future occasion.

But the "hiding of power" in the mind of man is not merely in its intellectual capacity, not merely in knowing things. Writing of the mind as the instrument by which the Christian believer does his work in the world, Dr. Lynn Harold Hough discovers the "hiding of its power" in the possession of certain ethical qualities which he describes as follows:

It must be a mind all dripping with human heartiness, and so it must be fed by constant and sympathetic human contacts. It must be a mind saturated with moral passion, and so it must know the strain and stress of personal struggle and all the tale of moral battle and of moral victory in the world. It must be a mind glowing with the sense of beauty, and so it must find its way into all the tale of the fashion in which sheer loveliness has made a place for itself in the life of man. It must be a mind radiant with the sense of the presence and potency of God in human life, and so it must know its own hours of silent and creative communion with the unseen Friend. It must find its supreme inspiration in the potency of the personality of Jesus, and so it must know the meaning of fellowship with the living Christ. All this is sure to seem too high for any of us; but for less than this we do not dare to aspire.

But power finds its highest expression in the moral and spiritual realm. And where is the hiding of spiritual power? What is the secret of the good man's strength and moral influence among those who know him? Is it not in his humble and contrite spirit? Is it not in his faith in

God? Is it not in his adoring and grateful heart, so abounding in love for the Heavenly Father and all his children? Is it not in his consecration to God and to the service of his fellow men? Is it not in his virtuous and consistent Christian life, his pious walk and godly conversation? Is it not in his closet where he prays in secret to his Father in heaven? Is it not in the "unction of the Holy One," the divine anointing of the Spirit that comes to him only who has found the secret place of the Most High and who abides under the shadow of the Almighty? In quietness is the good man's strength, and his spirit dwells in a pavilion of peace, even though he lives and labors amid the loud noises of a busy and restless world.

"The sources of the Nile," says Phillips Brooks, "may be very dark, while its waters down the valley are turning deserts into gardens. There has been no great teacher of mankind in whose nature have not met both the mystic and the moralist, the seeker after most transcendent truth and the enforcer of most practical duty."

"In quietness is your strength," says one of the inspired writers in the Holy Book. Another, commenting on Christ's words, "the meek shall inherit the earth," speaks of "the might of meekness;" it is only because the meek have power of conquest that they shall come to possess the earth. We all remember the fable we studied in childhood about the wind challenging the sun as to which had the greater power, and the agreement to test the matter by trying to make a passing traveler take off his cloak. First came the wind, and it blew and blew hard and long, but the harder and longer it blew, the closer and firmer did the traveler draw up his cloak around him, until the wind gave up the task as impossible. And then the sun came from behind the cloud that hid it and began to

shine upon the traveler, who soon loosened up the tightened garment; and warmer and warmer the sun sent down his genial rays, until at length the man removed his cloak entirely. The gentle sunshine proved more powerful than the boisterous blowing of the wind. Modesty and meekness, gentleness and love have a power all their own. It was in the still, small voice and not in the loud wind that God was heard to speak. The Holy Spirit in its working is compared to the wind in that we cannot see whence it cometh or whither it goeth, but of the Spirit's gentleness and warmth and light and life-giving power the sun is the symbol. One of Frances Ridley Havergal's verses enshrines a beautiful thought:

"There is a point of rest
At the great center of the cyclone's force,
A silence at its secret source;
A little child might slumber undistressed,
Without the ruffle of one fairy curl,
In that strange central calm amid the mighty whirl;
So in the center of these thoughts of God."

2. THE DYNAMIC VALUE OF PRAYER

There is no exercise of the human soul, no activity of the spiritual man, in the realm of personal religion with which we associate the idea of power so much as with prayer. There are, it is true, passive as well as active moods and phases of prayer; but we cannot think of effectual, prevailing prayer as itself a weak thing. The adjectives and nouns used to describe the prayer that has power with God and that gets things done among men are among the most virile and strenuous terms that belong to personal religion. Fervor, force, wrestling, energizing, agonizing, crying, intercession with groanings unutterable in words, importunate, besieging—these all refer to exercises, not of the body but of the soul, and not on the

surface, but in the depths of the soul—as the psalmist prayed, “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O God.” “Storm the throne of grace,” said John Wesley, speaking from much experience, “and persevere therein, and mercy will come down.” Let not the man who prays with a weak and wavering faith think, says St. James, that he shall receive anything from the Lord. Prayer that seeks and secures power from on high cannot itself be a weak and impotent thing.

Writing of prayer as “the most powerful organic of efficiency,” W. E. Doughty says: “The Bible often asserts and everywhere assumes that prayer has power to change things. Something really happens when men pray aright. In Christ’s teaching prayer involves the putting forth of vital energy intended to secure definite and unmistakable results. Prayer is not passive: it is active. It is the kinetic energy of the soul applied to the highest tasks in the kingdom. . . . Prayer puts forces at the disposal of God to be applied by him to definite tasks. Prayer does not change the will of God, but it enables God to change the wills of men. Prayer does not persuade God, but it gives God a power to bring to bear on men to persuade them. All prayer is directed to him, and the putting forth of prayer-energy releases forces which God can and does use to accomplish definite and practical ends.”

But the thing that inspires a great faith and a prayer of power must be something spiritual and not something of trifling significance and merely material value, such as food and drink, and raiment and riches; after which things the Gentiles seek, and because it is such things as these that they pray for, the idea of power is never associated with pagan prayer. Of all vain and impotent things in religion, pagan prayer—what Christ calls Gentile

prayer—is perhaps the most impotent; and such prayers, if offered by professing Christians, are just as impotent as when offered by a pagan worshiper. It is the thing we pray for, as well as the God we pray to, that invests one's faith and prayer with spiritual power. Few things that have been written on the dynamic value of prayer are better worth quoting than the following utterances by one who has written with more than ordinary clearness, illumination and vigor on this subject:

There is a conservation of spiritual energy, and the law of it is the law of prayer. Prayer is something better than presenting ourselves in the audience chamber of God and suing for favor in our own behalf or the behalf of those we love. Prayer is summing up together our noblest and ultimate desires, all that far excess of longings which are beyond any capacity of ours to realize save in dreams, and bringing all these hopes, so futile in us, to the throne of the Omnipotent. . . . And when God employs an unselfish human wish as a part of the capital of his providence and so fulfills it, a great marvel has come to pass, for God appears a Fellow Worker with man. When we commit to our loving and providential Father the issues of our own welfare in the world, no stress of soul is imposed upon us. But where sin is involved—either our own sin or others'—and stands in the way to be conquered, prayer passes from a breath of calm communion to an implement of pitched warfare, and we must use it for blows struck heavy and hard. Of the devils in ourselves and the devils in other men, it is ever true as the Master said: "This kind can come out by nothing save by prayer."

Let no one, then, imagine that a few placid reflections on the beauty of goodness can set a man free from his habits of sin. The exorcism of the demons is by prayer that strains the sinews of the soul—not by some languorous sentimental expectation that God will be sorry for us, seeing that we are not near so good as we should really love to be. When head and heart, the whole man, is in fiery revolt against the tyranny of evil, and life has become one terrific outcry for deliverance from "the body of this death," then the victory is at hand. But the highway that leads away from our sins toward God is forever a path of battle, a path to be traversed only with prayer at every step, all prayers of might and main. And the battling prayer availeth much. The mighty prayer of love itself becomes dynamic; it lifts men from the pit. Its very earnestness is intrinsic force, and God makes that force efficient.¹

¹Nolan Rice Best, "Beyond the Natural Order."

"There is no short cut to power," says Bertha Condé, in the volume already quoted from. "We pray for help when some painful calamity occurs and we want deliverance from our thorn in the flesh more than we want character. Sometimes this craving for deliverance becomes in a sense a thermometer which registers the degree of our idealism, and we find it has been falling with the years. In such a case, our 'thorn' may be a blessing in disguise, if it wakens us to spiritual needs. We cannot live on a low plane of thinking and pray on a high plane of faith—we cannot ask God to restore the dying body when we have no concern for the living spirit. Character must be consonant with our faith, or prayer becomes a mockery."

"The prayer of faith is the only power in the universe," said Robert Hall, "to which the great Jehovah yields. Prayer is the *sovereign remedy*."

The faith that removes mountains, it has been well said, is not faith in one's own powers, but faith in the power of God. In the feeblest faith, if it be genuine, omnipotence is hidden, and through it omnipotence works. It is by faith, and faith only, that we are united to the power of God, which, working in us and through us, accomplishes marvelous results. The prayer of faith is limitless within limits. All necessary conditions having been met, the prayer of faith has a sphere of its own in which it possesses a kind of "delegated omnipotence."

There is a hymn found in many of our Church hymnals, written nearly a century ago by John Aikman Wallace, of Scotland, which gives in simple and pleasing rhyme a poet's estimate of the efficacy of prayer in gaining the ear and the aid of Jehovah; how man may govern God through prayer, and bring down the power from on high to aid him in his work on earth. It is worth quoting here, singing as it does of the dynamic value of prayer:

“There is an eye that never sleeps
 Beneath the shades of night;
 There is an ear that never shuts,
 When sink the beams of light.

There is an arm that never tires,
 When human strength gives way;
 There is a love that never fails,
 When earthly loves decay.

That eye is fixed on seraph throngs;
 That arm upholds the sky;
 That ear is filled with angel songs;
 That love is throned on high.

But there's a power which man can wield,
 When mortal aid is vain,
 That eye, that arm, that love to reach,
 That list'ning ear to gain.

That power is prayer, which soars on high,
 Through Jesus, to the throne,
 And moves the hand which moves the world,
 To bring salvation down.”

3. THE ENDUEMENT OF POWER

The enduement of power is inseparably associated with the Holy Spirit. Christ's last words before his ascension were these: “Ye shall receive power *after* that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth.” So reads the King James Version. The Revised Version reads: “Ye shall receive power *when* the Holy Spirit is come upon you.” A marginal reading found in some Bibles is even more in keeping with the original: “Ye shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you.” This last makes it plain that the coming of the Holy Spirit upon one is in itself the enduement with power. St. Luke, in the closing chapter of his Gospel, had already used this very expression in describing the same scene and in reporting

these same last words of Jesus: "endued with power from on high." We are not left in any ambiguity, therefore, as to what the "endowment with power" means. It is the baptism of the Spirit; it is to be, with an active but absolutely acquiescent will, under the complete guidance of the Holy Spirit; it is to be anointed by the Holy Spirit; it is to have an unction from the Holy One, and as a result of this divine anointing to know all things pertaining to the experience of a regenerate soul, truths which no one can know who is carnal minded.

But we are told that for one to be thus anointed and receive the witness of the Spirit is for a purpose, a very definite purpose—namely, that he may be himself a witness and bear testimony unto the spiritual experience he has entered into and the new knowledge that has come to him as a result of that experience. The outpouring of the Spirit comes as a result of regenerate and spiritual-minded men bearing witness to things they themselves know because they have seen them with their own eyes and heard them with their own ears, the eyes and ears not of the fleshly body, but of the soul, for flesh and blood cannot reveal these things unto men. Men are endued with power from on high, not that they may be exalted above their fellows and made happy, but that they may bear witness to the truth and find their happiness in serving rather than in being served.

There was one occasion when Peter and John displayed unwonted spiritual power, and the people are said to have marveled at the words they spoke and the things they did, because they were "unlearned and ignorant men." The mystery was presently solved; the secret was found out; the hiding of their power was revealed. The explanation is given in these words: "And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Uninterrupted

communion with Jesus is the secret of a life of abiding spiritual power.

"Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Thus wrote St. John in his "Epistle of Assurance." It is not intellectual knowledge that he refers to here; it is a knowledge that comes in a different way. It is a knowledge that comes from a Divine anointing, from a baptism of the Holy Spirit, from an experience of the soul with God, from a descent into some of the deep things of Christian experience, from an ascent into the heights of holiness, from a sojourn on the mount of vision where Christ is transfigured. This is a knowledge the attainment of which means enduement "with power from on high." The pathway that leads to this knowledge leads first to the "upper chamber" of prayer, the "power house" of the Spirit.

We live in the dispensation of the Spirit. If this dispensation be for us identified with the kingdom of God and the Christian Church, it is only in so far as the Holy Spirit dwells and operates within that it is a spiritual power house. *Ubi Spiritus, ibi ecclesia*—where the Holy Spirit is, manifesting his presence and power, there the Church is. It is not a question of outward form and apostolic pedigree that is determinative in settling the question as to what and where the true Church is; it is a question pertaining, not to the form of the Church's government and its lineal and unbroken descent from the apostles, but to the working of the Holy Spirit who manifests his presence and power in the conviction and conversion of sinners and in the edification of believers. It is only, then, as we get in touch with the Holy Spirit, the real Power in the power house, that we can hope to have the power imparted to us.

Some things are conductors and others are noncon-

ductors of power. The trolley wires all run to the power house. Some things at the other end of the wire can draw out the power and store it for either immediate or later use, while other objects have no drawing power; the reservoir releases no power to them. God's trolley lines of power, spirit-charged, run everywhere throughout the world. With the uplifted arm of prayer it is ours to reach the trolley lines that run to the power house of the Spirit; but only as faith characterizes and inspires the soul that prays can the prayer prove to be the fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous man that availeth much. It takes faith as well as prayer to draw the dynamic currents from the power house of the Spirit.

"The more religious a man is, the more hopeful he should be of perceiving God's method of indwelling power and spiritual control;" thus writes Dr. M. P. Talling, in his volume titled "Inter-Communion with God." "But if communion with God is part of man's life, and the source of its power, giving quality and direction to all its overflow, then prayer holds a vital relation to all experience, and not only so, but to the extent that its guidance is valuable, to that same extent is it important that its influence should be understood and its power appropriated. The movement of the Supreme Spirit upon the finite spirit must be recognized as part of **our** intercourse with God. This truth is the key to everything else. For all that satisfies human need, causing development and imparting power, comes from God to man through communion, making communion a mutual act in which we receive from and listen to God as well as speak to him. The man who would be effective in prayer must be one with God in heart and thought, and then so execute his thought and feeling that God's will becomes subjective

in experience and consciousness and objective in deeds and movement."

Sometimes we see a placard in the window of a store that reads: "For rent, with or without power." It costs less to rent "without power." There are some Churches into whose membership men are permitted to enter either "with or without power," and because it costs less of self-denial and prayer and service to come in "without power," they choose to enter that way. As a rule, these members make but poor and temporary tenants. Christ posts no such placard at the door of his Church. "I am the door," said Christ. By him if any man enter, and with him if he abide, and Christ's words abide in him, then and then only, is he a true and worthy member of the Church of Jesus Christ. Christ wants only those to come into his fellowship and service who are willing to pay the price for coming in "with power" and come in, not as uncertain and temporary tenants, but as abiding copartners for life, for life eternal.

4. EQUIPMENT FOR SERVICE THE PURPOSE OF ALL DIVINELY IMPARTED POWER

And to what end and for what purpose does a Christian believer receive this enduement of power from on high? Is it simply that he may have his faith honored and his prayer answered? Is it that he may be placed in possession of an occult and mystic magic that does not belong to men less saintly than he? Is it that he may rejoice in his sacred riches and spiritual superiority over others less privileged than he? Is it that he may be made happy and enjoy the luxury of the witness of the Spirit and the assurance of his election to spiritual privileges that belong to none but the elect? To none of these questions can we give an affirmative answer. Although these things may in

varying degrees accompany and follow his enduement with power from on high, they are not the purpose for which he is invested with the power. On the contrary, this one great purpose is that he may be equipped for service. Whatever may or may not be involved in one's sanctification as a personal spiritual experience, it is for service that the Holy Spirit sanctifies men and gives them power. And this service, far from being what the believer would choose for himself, oftener than otherwise involves sacrifice and self-denial and suffering of some kind, and sometimes the sacrificial service to which he is called takes him, as it did his Lord, to the very gates of death. Only as one's religion finds expression in service and sacrifice is he able to give proof convincing to others that his enduement of power is from on high.

There are surely many different modes of serving, and each one's enduement will be with power to serve in whatever place and manner and measure has been determined for him by a providence over which he himself has had no control. Because one is an invalid, a "shut-in," it does not follow that he is excluded from high and holy service. He can serve in many ways whose lot it is to be housed and confined by long sickness and suffering. By sweetness of spirit and cheerful conversation, by the exercise of faith and patience and prayer and thoughtfulness of others, many a sick chamber has been made the most radiant spiritual spot in a whole community, a very "upper chamber" from which those who enter come away spiritually enriched, and blessed beyond any enrichment they derive from their own private prayers or from the public worship in the sanctuary. He may serve who only suffers, and he truly works to whom it is given only to watch and wait.

But God has no privileged and petted "parlor saints"

whose only business is to get and enjoy spiritual blessings and indulge in the luxury of saying prayers that carry along with them no vision and burden of the world's deep needs and no response to the clamant call for sacrificial service. He, then, who would both get and retain this power from on high, must not only be a man of faith and prayer, but a man of ceaseless, loving, and self-sacrificing service to his fellow men.

Those are beautiful verses in which Charlotte Perkins Gilman prays for "light to see and power to do":

"Only for these I pray,
Pray with assurance strong;
Light to discover the way,
Power to follow it long.

Let me have light to see,
Light to be sure and know;
When the road is clear to me,
Willingly I will go.

Let me have power to do,
Power of the brain and nerve;
Though the task is heavy and new,
Willingly I will serve.

My prayers are lesser than three;
Nothing I pray for but two;
Let me have light to see,
Let me have power to do."

John Fletcher of Madeley, one of John Wesley's most effective fellow workers, was one of the saintliest men of whom we have any record in the entire compass of Christian biography. His prayers were periods of preparation for service. He used to lecture to theological students on such topics as the meaning and value of prayer, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the Divine anointing for service, and on similar themes. He would sometimes

close his lecture by saying: "This is the theory of prayer and spiritual power; now will those who want to practice prayer and obtain the power come with me to the upper room?" Whereupon they would close their books and quietly and reverently follow the saintly man to the upper room and spend with him one or two hours in the practice of prayer. These hours, we are told, often proved to be seasons not only of prayer but of enduement with pentecostal power, from which they went forth ready for whatever service they were called on to render.

Those who are privileged to ascend the Mount of Transfiguration and participate in the glory there revealed are only human when they desire and ask to be permitted to build a tabernacle and abide there on the radiant mountain top of vision, basking in the smiles of their glorified Lord. But how does the Master answer their prayer? "Not so," we seem to hear him say; "not up here is your abiding place, but down yonder in the lowlands of toil and dust and heat, where the poor, the suffering, the sinful, the possessed of devils are clamoring for some one to help them. There is your work; it is that you may the better do it that I have given you this vision and this divine anointing. Go in my name and, through the power you have received, cast the devils out of souls enslaved to sin and Satan. And forget not, as you work, that this kind cometh not forth except by prayer and self-denial."

To the reader who comes to the close of this volume desiring to be not a reader and hearer only, but a doer of the word, the reading of George MacDonald's familiar and oft-quoted lines, titled "Obedience," cannot fail to prove a call to unselfish and altruistic service. It is quoted at the end of these studies that it may serve not only as an inspiration to service, but as a "benediction that follows after prayer."

"I said, 'Let me walk in the fields.'
He said, 'No, walk in the town.'
I said, 'There are no flowers there.'
He said, 'No flowers, but a crown.'

I said, 'But the skies are black;
There is nothing but noise and din;'
And he wept as he sent me back—
'There is more,' he said, 'there is sin.'

I said, 'But the air is thick;
The fogs are veiling the sun.'
He answered, 'Yet souls are sick,
And souls in the dark undone.'

I said, 'I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, **they say.**'
He said, 'Choose thou to-night,
If I am to miss you or they.'

I pleaded for time to be given.
He said, 'Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven
To have followed the steps of **your Guide.**'

I cast one look at the fields;
Then I set my face to the town.
He said, 'My child, do you yield?
Will you leave the flowers for the crown?'

Then into His hand went mine;
And into my heart came He;
Now I walk, in a light divine,
The path I had feared to see."

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NOTE

THE very full analysis of the several chapters of this volume found in the table of contents on pages vii-xiv renders unnecessary a minute index of subjects. It is desirable, however, that the many references by name to individuals whose writings are mentioned and quoted from shall be made easily accessible to the reader. The titles of the various volumes which the author would name as a bibliography on the subjects of Providence, Prayer, and Power are found in this index; and no more convincing proof can be given of the excellence of many of these volumes than is furnished by the quotations taken from them. Especially is this true where the volumes are quoted from several times. The young ministers especially who are seeking suggestions and guidance as to helpful books to place in their own libraries will appreciate the opportunity here furnished of reading quotations extended enough to enable them to judge of the thought and style of the authors whose works we are here commending to them. The following index is itself a bibliography.

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